

PREVENTING A HOLLOW ARMY:  
20TH CENTURY LESSONS  
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
Strategy

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

PREVENTING A HOLLOW ARMY: 20TH CENTURY LESSONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY, by Major Ethan J. Diven, 109 pages.

This thesis researches the theory of a “hollow force” that described the U.S. Army after the Vietnam War and determines if the theory applies to the Army today. The theory describes the conditions of a “hollow force” through seven factors: low support for the military, pressure to cut defense spending, difficulties in maintaining an all-volunteer force, declining pay, poor morale, delays in fielding modern armaments and equipment and finally inadequate attention to maintenance of existing equipment. The factors are used to conduct a comparative analysis between the post-Vietnam War Army and the force of today as leaders prepare for the security challenges of the future in a fiscally constrained environment. The reductions in force structure and defense spending that followed the Vietnam War appear similar to current defense plans; however, despite the use of the term “hollow force” by military and political leaders to describe where the Army is headed, not all of the seven factors are applicable today. The thesis of this research is that the post-Vietnam Army was a “hollow force.” However, that theory does not apply to the Army today.

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## ACRONYMS

APS	Army Posture Statement
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
COIN	Counterinsurgency
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
O&M	Operations and Maintenance



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

During his address to attendees at the Eisenhower Lunch on October 11, 2011 as part of the Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition, Chief of Staff of the Army General Raymond Odierno stated, “In the past during periods of austerity, we’ve said we’ll do more with less. As we move ahead under significant budget restrictions, we’ll have to do less with less. We’ll have to accept higher levels of risk than we have in the past. Determining where it’s best to do so is the primary task before us” (Lopez 2011, 1). This statement from the current Chief of Staff of the United States Army to all current service men and women that the senior leadership of the United States Army understands that the operating environment is changing and with it comes changes to the mission of the Army as well as how it is resourced. The Army will continue to execute its assigned missions however the politicians must respect that with decreased size and resourcing there will inevitably be a decrease in capability with expectation management being paramount on the service and political understanding.

During an October 2011 testimony to the House Armed Services Subcommittee of the United States Congress, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army General Peter Chiarelli’s opening comments acknowledged that budget cuts and force reductions were inevitably in the Army’s future and would be made, but these cuts had to be made responsibly so that the United States did not end up with either a hollow force or an unbalanced force (Chiarelli 2011, 2). The Vice Chief of Staff then states that,

the cuts will deeply impact every part of our Army and our ability to meet our national security objectives and effectively protect our country against all threats. . . . I went through an Army that came out of Vietnam, and did some of the same kind of things. And for 10 to 12 years we had to rebuild the Army. This—these questions, these decisions have been made before and there’s just a tendency to believe at the end of the war that we’ll never need ground forces again. Well, I tell you that we’ve never got that right. We have always required them. We just don’t have the imagination to always be able to predict exactly when that will be. (Chiarelli 2011)

The term “hollow force” was first used to describe the Army of the late 1970s and then again during the 1990s to describe military forces that appeared mission ready, but in actuality suffered from shortages of personnel, equipment, and maintenance or suffered from deficiencies in training (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 1). Additionally, the size and composition of the force appeared adequate on paper; shortcomings were identified when these forces were subjected to further scrutiny and raised questions if these forces would be able to accomplish the assigned wartime missions (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 1).

The Army is entering a period of transition and the Vice Chief’s testimony provides insight, as well as demonstrates a personal conviction, to not allow the transition to damage the Army. By using the term “hollow force” when testifying about the current Army, he recalls the sensitive subject of post-Vietnam reductions in a dramatic comparison to a low point in 20th Century United States military history. The Army benefitted from increased funding for training, equipment, protective vehicles, and technology that enabled the simultaneous execution of two major conflicts over the past decade. The completion of major combat operations in Iraq and a decision point for Afghanistan as the number of combat troops reduces and a transition to advisory missions, the future looks tumultuous for the Army. Looming budget cuts and political

jockeying become more prevalent in the media on a daily basis with the Department of Defense budget reductions, specifically the Army's, being a potential major bill payer.

The Army simultaneously executed Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom for almost an entire decade up through the end of 2011, however Operation New Dawn ended in December 2011 and Operation Enduring Freedom will transition from a major combat operation to a security force assistance and advisory mission by the end of 2014 (Belasco 2011, 2). The senior Army commander responsible for the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), General Robert Cone, describes the reduction of forces in Iraq and draw down in Afghanistan as a transition point for the Army similar to the comments of the VCSA to the HASC Subcommittee, requiring us to balance the requirements of the current fights with ensuring readiness for the future (Cone 2011, 72). The challenge lies in that the Army does not choose the type of conflict we will engage in therefore leaders are challenged to become experts in a balance of offensive, defensive and stability operations (Cone 2011, 72).

The Army benefitted from a nation and a government that willingly devoted financial resources to ensure the success of these two operations, allowing increases in defense spending, increase in force sizes and changes to force structure to maximize the capabilities and relationship of the Soldier and technology. The recent failure of the United States Congress Joint Committee on Deficit Reduction to agree on budget reduction measures automatically triggered an estimated \$500 billion worth of defense cuts on top of the \$450 billion the department of defense is already tasked to cut, that will begin in 2013 and total over \$1 trillion over the next decade (Burton and Eastman 2012, Slide 4). House Armed Service Committee Chairman, Representative Buck McKeon,

vows to not let the cuts stand and promises to introduce legislation that will prevent the cuts from happening and his frustrations are echoed by the Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta (Ewing 2011, 1). However, sequestration is expected to begin in January of 2013 and service members are naïve to think the effects of fiscal constraints will not be felt in the very near future. The Army many of us have grown up in over the last decade is faced with likely fiscal conservatism and force size reduction in the middle of the heated debate (Barno, Bensahel, and Sharp 2011, 6).

Current U.S. National Security Strategy, Defense Strategy, and professional journals forecast the requirement to remain prepared to execute full spectrum operations, now termed as “Decisive Action,” consisting of offense, defense, and stability operations against enemies that may mirror our own capabilities, demonstrate an asymmetrical or insurgent threat, or a hybrid of both and also include defense support to civil authorities (DOA 2011, 1). The required flexibility while operating on a constrained budget provides a challenge for leaders at all levels but not a new challenge. The post-conflict reductions to the Army’s size, budget allocation, and access to resources may provide insight into the Army’s future. The Army will experience challenges in resourcing and make changes to its existing force structure that will assume risks emphasizing or de-emphasizing procurement, research and development investment, force size, or focusing on potential threats and expected conventional or counterinsurgency (COIN) operations. Accepting this risk and attempting to mitigate it will challenge the Army’s ability to execute combat operations in an ever-changing operating environment.

The United States cannot predict with certainty the nature, location or capability of the nation’s next adversary or major combat operations but it can choose whether or

not to become involved based on the capabilities and resources available. The Army's leadership is executing a campaign to educate the Army's leaders to become experts in a mix of offensive, defensive, and stability operations across a full spectrum of combat operations. The Army recently updated its doctrine to account for the dynamic environment by describing the requirement for flexibility through the core competencies of combined arms maneuver and wide area security to reflect the current operational environment in doctrinal terms that capture the lessons learned over the last ten years of persistent conflict (Cone 2011, 72). The challenge in applying these lessons is to confirm the required capabilities to combat threats with the appropriate force structure in a volatile international environment that can consist of any number of adversaries. The current challenges of budget pressure and the changing strategic guidance provided by the leaders of the Defense Department has driven discussion by the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army in congressional testimony, the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Secretary of the Army when addressing how the Army will draw down in the future (Feickert and Henning 2012, 24-25). The Army's leaders allude to and in some occasions openly address repeating the mistakes of the past with respect to reductions following the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) leading to a "hollow force." A "hollow force" is described as giving the appearance of readiness when in fact the capability is not really there and will be further defined in detail in Chapter 2. Determining whether the Army is making reductions and downsizing in a similar fashion and in a similar environment as the post-Vietnam period is the genesis of this research.

The primary research questions and the supporting secondary research questions describe the purpose and provide focus for this thesis. The limitations, delimitations and

scope of the research provide the framework for which the researcher and the reader use to understand how the research is conducted, what was researched, what is just outside the scope of the research but worth additional study, and also what is not included in the research. Several key assumptions allow the reader a basic understanding of where the research begins and why it travels a particular path. The summary captures the key points of the first chapter and explains where the remainder of the thesis is driving.

### Primary Research Question

Does the theory of a “hollow force” following the Vietnam War apply to the Army today?

### Secondary Research Questions

1. What factors contributed to the “hollow force” following the Vietnam War?
2. Do these factors still apply in today’s operational environment?

### Assumptions

Several assumptions are necessary to enable the research and allow the analysis to demonstrate the truth of the findings of this thesis. They establish a basis from which to conduct the research and also provide the reader a framework from which to read and understand the thesis. The following assumptions establish the baseline and framework to conduct the research from and for the reader to understand the analysis and conclusions. They additionally provide the context for the reduction discussion in congress and at the senior military levels, in addition to what is driving decisions that are occurring at the strategic level.



1. The Army existed as a “hollow force” as a result of reductions following the Vietnam War during the late 1970s (Feickert and Daggett 2012). Military and political leaders allude to the “hollow force” that resulted from the reductions after the Vietnam War and establishing the seven factors utilized by Feickert and Daggett as describing the “hollow force” enables comparison with the near and mid-term future downsizing actions in the current environment.
2. The Federal Government will use the *2010 National Security Strategy* and the recently released January 2012 *Sustaining U.S Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense* as the strategic guidance document for the Department of Defense and the President’s Fiscal Year 2013 defense budget as the primary documents to balance risk and required capabilities when developing the future force structure (Obama 2010; DOD 2012). Establishing these policy documents as the baseline guidance enables the understanding of why decisions to reduce and focus in certain areas are happening.
3. There will be minimal changes to the *National Security Strategy*, *National Defense Strategy*, and the *National Military Strategy* until calendar year 2014 as evidenced by the President and Secretary of Defense providing guidance in the form of the 2012 strategic guidance document, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (DOD 2012, 1). Accepting that there will not be any changes to the national level strategies establishes a baseline for military leaders to address capabilities required and resources needed.

4. The Army will remain committed to supporting Operation Enduring Freedom until calendar year 2014 (DOA 2012, 3; AFRICOM J1/J8 2011). Establishing the requirement for the Army to remain committed to the war in Afghanistan while conducting reductions as the fiscal environment changes establishes the first priority in changing the Army as remaining committed to ongoing operations and then preparing for future conflicts.
5. The Department of Defense, and specifically the Army, will undergo significant budget reductions and force structure changes beginning in 2013 (Burton and Eastman 2012). This assumption accepts that although the fiscal year 2013 budget is not yet approved, significant changes have already been made in preparation for the future as the details are not finalized, but downsizing is going to occur.
6. The total number of Active Component Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) in the Army will gradually reduce from 45 to 32 to facilitate the reduction in end strength by 2017 (Bacon 2012). Only two of the BCTs have been identified in the downsizing plan but it is significant to understand that more will be named in the future to enable force structure changes and the fiscal year 2017 active duty end strength total to be achieved.

### Limitations

The primary limitation to the scope of this thesis is concentrating on the perspective of only the United States Army and not encompassing the other services within the Department of Defense. This thesis will provide only the land force point of view to limit the breadth of the thesis or the prosecution of the research and completion

of the final thesis. Some data provides a Department of Defense figure or perspective and requires inference or deduction to achieve the Army perspective in order to focus the scope of the thesis to only the United States Army.

The second limitation is the research cutoff time of May 14, 2012 to prevent the continued updating of impending fiscal constraints, political rhetoric focused on defense oriented budget cuts, and potential changes in force structure. Establishing a research cutoff point will allow analysis of the research data and a timely submission of the final thesis product.

The third limitation is only researching historical post conflict actions of the Vietnam War. This is primarily to limit the scope of the research project and ensure relevancy of the topics addressed. Post World War II and Korea research provides voluminous amounts of data and analysis however the thesis assumption that a “hollow force” existed following the Vietnam War enables a baseline to compare with the current environment.

The delimitations of this research include the transferring of historically Army specific tasks to the other services and the Army of the 1990s. Neither of these areas are researched in detail in order to maintain a narrow scope of the thesis and focus the conclusions on the Army in the near term future as compared to the Army following the Vietnam War.

### Significance

This thesis is significant to the current and future development and employment of the Army in a complex and ever changing operational environment as it identifies similarities of the current state of military affairs with historical post conflict actions.

Defense commentators have continuously noted that we as a nation and an Army continue to focus and prepare our forces for the last war. If the civilian and military leadership of the United States government and the Army do not learn from history then they may repeat the same mistakes or types of mistakes, therefore highlighting the importance of studying the actions of the past, and the significance of attempting to consolidate the lessons in historical context better informs future decisions and policy.

Studying the past and incorporating the lessons of history is an important step in understanding the current challenges that face the United States and the Army today. Budget reductions and changes in force structure are not a new problem for military and civilian leaders therefore studying how leaders have planned and executed downsizing in the past enables a more comprehensive understanding of the present and how it may influence the future. “Learning from our history of post-conflict transitions, the critical point here is that leadership within the Army, specifically the competence and character of its individual leaders at all levels, uniformed and civilian, is the single most influential factor in the Army being, and remaining, a military profession” (Snider 2012, 7). Placing the near and mid-term reduction in force and budget in comparison with the actions that followed Vietnam enables discussion and further research by fellow professionals.

### Summary

Determining whether the United States Army is headed toward becoming a “hollow force” by comparing it with the Army following the Vietnam War will shed light on the current discussions, in addition to providing context and insights into how reducing the size of the Army and reducing its budget may influence future readiness. These decisions influence the development of national strategy as the Army must possess

the capabilities to execute the strategy and the resources to provide the capabilities.

“Strategy is all about *how* (way or concept) leadership will use *power* (means or resources available to the state to exercise control over sets of circumstances and geographic locations to achieve *objectives* (ends) that support state interests.

Unfortunately, when theorists write about strategy, they sometimes fail to consider the impacts of fiscal constraints” (McCreary 2012, 14). The foreboding forecast of significant defense budget cuts while maintaining the requirement to execute current national defense strategy is a challenging problem set. Acknowledging the requirement to analyze defense strategy in expectation of fiscal constraints for the Army requires a reminder of previous post conflict defense practices. This thesis attempts to highlight the challenges of reducing the Army’s post conflict force structure while maintaining the capabilities to fight the conflicts of the future.

Chapter 1 introduced the background of the thesis, explained the problem and why it is important to contemporary leaders. The first chapter also provided the overview of the thesis in the form of primary and secondary research questions, the thesis assumptions, its limitations, and delimitations so the reader knows what will be covered. Chapter 2 categorizes the literature into similar bodies used in completing the thesis. The chapter also comments on research previously conducted into the origins and conditions that led to the creation of a “hollow force.” Additionally, similar models and examples of analysis from other researchers are introduced which looked at the same set of problems in a similar fashion to provide different points of view for comparison with this research. Chapter 3 describes the methodology used to conduct the research to enable the reader’s understanding of the research design and why this particular methodology is appropriate

for this research. Chapter 4 uses the methodology and a seven factor analysis of the “hollow force” definition to evaluate the post-Vietnam drawdown and the prospective post-GWOT drawdown. Chapter 5 provides insights and interpretations of the data from the previous chapter and offers the trends or conclusions in the context of the current and future operational environment.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The recent release of the President's and Department of Defense's Strategic Guidance sets the stage for the post conflict expectation of fiscal conservatism, but the question of whether or not we are creating another "hollow force" similar to the Army of the late 1970s surfaces in senior military leader testimonies to Congress, open source media, and professional discussion across the Army. The following chapter introduces literature that describes post-Vietnam conflict changes in force structure and defense spending and how the development of policy today may impact the Army now and in the future.

While serving as the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Edward C. Meyer is given credit for introducing the term "hollow force" during a 1980 testimony to the House Armed Services Committee. He stated,

we have a hollow Army. Our forward deployed forces are at full strength in Europe, Panama, and in Korea. Our tactical forces in the United States are some 17,000 under strength. Therefore, anywhere you go in the United States, except for the 82d Airborne Division, which is also filled up, you will find companies and platoons which have been zeroed out. (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 8)

This concept is applied in today's more contemporary environment as former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates also used the term "hollow force" in a 2011 speech on defense spending at the American Enterprise Institute.

I am determined that we not repeat the mistakes of the past, where budgets were met mostly by taking a percentage off the top of everything, the simplest and most politically expedient approach both inside the Pentagon and out of it. That kind of "salami slicing" approach preserves the overhead and maintains the force structure on paper, but results in a hollowing-out of the force from a lack of proper training, maintenance, and equipment-and manpower. That's what

happened in the 1970s-a disastrous period for our military-and to a lesser extent during the late 1990s. (Gates 2011b)

Current Army leaders have recently used the term and its negative connotations in congressional testimony and when speaking to the press. The Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, General Peter W. Chiarelli, used the term when commenting on the current state of the Army, budget cuts, and force reductions when he stated, “we must make them responsibly so that we do not end up with either a hollowed out force . . . or an unbalanced force” (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 14).

Analysts, historians, and military officers have researched and written extensively about the nature, origin, and implications of the “hollow force”, especially when writing about reductions and downsizing in the latter half of the 20th Century. The concept is not a new one and the generally accepted definition of the “hollow force” is one that appears to be fully capable and ready, but in actuality it is not.

Former Army Officer and current President for the independent policy research institute Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, Andrew Krepinevich describes the lessons learned, or not learned, from the Vietnam War in *The Army and Vietnam* (Krepinevich 1988). He researches the actions during Vietnam by breaking the war into three periods of the Advisory Years (1954-1965), the Years of Intervention (1965-1968), and the Years of Withdrawal (1968-1973) and the roles of the key leaders of the United States military and the strategic approaches attempted during the conflict (Krepinevich 1986). The Years of Withdrawal period and immediately following the war are used to highlight the importance of low intensity conflict as the most likely type of warfare the United States will encounter in the future and the key lesson from Vietnam being the requirement to maintain the capability to execute low intensity conflicts and COIN



(Krepinevich 1986, 274). He also places some of the blame for creating the Army that followed Vietnam on the Army, for deliberately unlearning the lessons of Vietnam by building its force structure around fighting conventional wars and not contingencies or low intensity conflicts after over a decade of fighting one (Krepinevich 1986, 268-274).

*The Analysis of U.S Military Mobilizations, Demobilizations, and Peacetime Force Maintenance from 1890 to 1991* provides conclusions in that military readiness suffers because the usual post-war sequence of events includes a reduction in authorized military strength due to fiscal constraints in part to recover from large wartime expenditures (Kloimwieder and Owen 1992, 167-172). Military leaders attempt to maintain the organizational structure of a larger force by rounding it out with additional manpower in the event of conflict. Divisions in the continental United States were reduced to two active duty brigades with the third, or roundout brigade, coming from the reserve component after mobilization due to a major conflict. This concept ultimately leads to a “hollow force” as the unit appears to be capable however the rounding out force does not have the required capabilities or training to accomplish the mission in the same timeframe as its active duty counterpart (Kloimwieder and Owen 1992, 167-172). This concept continues to build on the trend of previous authors and as active duty military officers, Kloimwieder and Owen highlight the issues of utilizing forces forward in the European theater with the expected augmentation of units that were not realistically manned or trained.

As part of the 1992 Defense Conversion Commissions preparation of the report, *Adapting to the Drawdown*, research analyst William G. Stewart conducted a historical case study of post-conflict actions of the United States following World War II through

the Cold War (Stewart 1993, iii-vii). He identifies a difference in scale between World War II and the following conflicts of Korea, Vietnam and the Cold War, with the three smaller conflicts representing a smaller portion of a larger national economy (Davis 1993, vi). He identified that recession typically followed the war period due to increases in defense spending and compares the different approaches that administrations used to offset spending and transition to a peacetime economy (Stewart 1993, vii). Stewart attributes the recession that followed the Vietnam War to the economy being managed very poorly during the post-war draw down, although using a smaller portion of the economy to support the war than the Korean War, unemployment during the war was 4.5 percent with the economy operating at 90 percent efficiency but a failure to increase taxes to support the war and continued spending on Great Society programs raised inflation from 1.3 percent in 1964 to 11 percent in 1974 and created poor economic conditions that led to the “hollow force” (Stewart 1993, 37).

United States Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Polly A. Peyer utilized a similar methodology when researching the “hollow force” following the Vietnam War in comparison to the late 1990s in her National Defense University research paper, *Hollow Force: Scare or Dare*. She uses the definition of a “hollow force” giving the appearance of readiness but in reality the capability is not really there, and describes hollowness through the elements of people and equipment (Peyer 1994, 5). She breaks the larger elements into sub-elements for further explanation with the element of people broken into the sub-categories: recruiting quality people, retaining quality people, quality of life, training and leadership while the element of equipment is broken into the sub-categories of modernization, research and development, and spares, concluding that the presence of

these elements equals a ready force while the absence creates a hollow one (Peyer 1994, 5). She focuses on all the services during her research and identifies the cause for concern and using the term “hollow force” is the fear that reductions were happening in the 1990s faster than a reduction in commitments of the Department of Defense and that the concept of a “hollow force” and invoking the term stirs leaders in the form of a “dare” to ensure appropriate systems and metrics are put into place during defense reductions (Peyer 1994, 29-31). She identifies the factors contributing to the “hollow force” following the Vietnam War in personnel and logistics, comparing them to the conditions following the end of the Cold War, identifying similarities in the economic environment that led to a pay gap between the military and civilian sectors due to the reduction in pay and benefits, the disparity between the quality of recruits and retention, and finally the negative impact of resources that degraded maintenance capabilities that ultimately led to the “hollow force” (Peyer 1994, 9-10).

The Center for Naval Analyses conducted a study from the late 1980s through the mid-1990s utilizing the same seven contributing factors that Feickert and Daggett later used in *Avoiding a Hollow Force: An Examination of Navy Readiness*. The report analyzed Navy readiness reports and described a “hollow force” as the general state that persists whenever maintenance problems dominate the force, poor quality sailors are the rule rather than the exception and when meaningful training is both scarce and questionable, ultimately determining that a “hollow force” existed in the Navy in the 1970s and early 1980s (Robinson et al. 1996). The team of analysts identified seven factors that contributed to a “hollow force”: low public support for the military, pressure to cut defense spending, difficulties in maintaining an all-volunteer force, declining pay,

poor morale, delays in fielding modern armaments and equipment and inadequate attention to maintenance of existing equipment and find that the term “hollow force” may be inappropriate to describe the state of the force today (Robinson et al. 1996, 7). Although this is a Navy centric study, the use of the same seven factors to identify a “hollow force” in the Navy is applicable when studying the Army during the same time period and for comparison with the environment today.

The United States typically displays fiscal conservatism in the years following a major conflict (Cody 1999, 16-17). Former Chief of Staff of the Army during the 1962 to 1964 period leading up to the Vietnam War, General Maxwell Taylor was intimately involved in the decision to send troops to Vietnam and later commented on fiscal conservatism in 1968 stating that this is tempered by the fact that our national foreign policy interests are of a split personality, one of idealism with the belief that it is the responsibility as the United States of America to serve as an international policeman ensuring peace and stability (Taylor 1968, 8). Realism counterbalances idealistic desires by analyzing the forces and capabilities available and that can be fiscally afforded as compared to strategic objectives of the national foreign policy (Staten 2005, 1 and Taylor 1968, 8). The period following conflict is typically characterized by realism with the evolution of idealism slowly finding its way back into foreign policy the further away the nation departs from the period of conflict. Our nation often finds itself dominated by idealism as a new conflict arises, leaving us scrambling to fill in the capability gap (Staten 2005, 1). A policy of idealism enables leaders to commit the Army to conflicts that are determined to be of vital national interest and dedicates resources in the form of money and forces to support conflict, realism follows when the price of this commitment

requires reduction and downsizing to pay the bills for the execution of previous idealism and contributes to hollowness to realign military spending with more realistic national policy objectives.

The economy and defense budget are at the focal point of national discussion and a report from the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, where Andrew Krepinevich is the president, show that there is historic pressure and precedent for budget reductions. The report highlights that today's environment is in the normal band of expected reductions with post conflict budget cuts of 53 percent after the Korean War, 26 percent after the Vietnam War, and 34 percent after the end of the Cold War (Harrison 2011, 1). This is compared to the possible 31 percent cut if all the current administration's proposed cuts are enacted (Clark 2011, 1).

Combat Studies Institute historian Robert T. Davis II describes Army actions during the latter half of the twentieth century in *The Challenge of Adaptation: The U.S. Army in the Aftermath of Conflict 1953-2000*. He describes the reorganization the Army has undergone over the last sixty years, focusing on the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Cold War leading up to the GWOT in the framework of the strategic environment, the lessons learned from the last war and how that prepared the Army to fight the next war (Davis 2008, 111-118). Davis concludes that the post-conflict United States leadership enters into a time of reflection and adaptations while resisting to focus on preparing on one type of war in the future, but maintain the idea of the spectrum of conflict as the Army prepares for the future (Davis 2008, 116-117).

United States Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel Russell Burton's case study of the downsizing after 20th century conflicts of the ground forces of the United States included

both the United States Army and the Marine Corps. He describes the state of the forces today and concludes that the United States should focus on Irregular Warfare as a core competency (Burton 2011, 4). He identifies manpower, training and materiel as the important factors of force structure and that the United States will face fiscal challenges in the future (Burton 2011, 13).

He describes the “hollow force” as being robust on paper but lacking in the capabilities required to fight and win the nation’s wars and is additionally influenced by the government’s inability to provide a realistic national security policy with respect to these capabilities due to manpower and material inadequacies (Burton 2011, 2). He identifies the “hollow force” concept using the generally accepted definition from the Vietnam era and then makes eight recommendations based on the current and future strategic environment. Burton focuses on the future war paradigm, two major regional conflicts (MRCs), the total force concept and balancing the roles of the Active and Reserve Components, the importance of providing a new national security strategy similar to NSC 68, responsible modernization and education (Burton 2011, 17-56).

Reductions in manpower result in combat ineffective units or units that are eliminated altogether. The remaining units lack the materiel in quality and quantity to adequately train to successfully execute their mission essential task list (METL) (Burton 2011, 2-3). These characteristics typically arise after periods of prolonged conflict leaving a force that is unable to accomplish its assigned missions. Preventing a “hollow force” is accomplished by risk identification and risk mitigation (Burton 2011, 18-19). DOTMLPF is broken into doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities that enable solutions for force structure development

(CGSC 2010b, F102RD-1). Projections of mission sets and assumptions of the resources available enable force structure decisions to be optimized by using the DOTMPLF methodology as a tool to conduct integrated analysis and develop solutions to existing capability gaps. Identification of the required units and capabilities is the desired balance. The “hollow force” exists when there are units that are incapable through being understrength, having inadequate equipment, training, or all of these conditions, thereby not identifying the risk appropriately or improperly mitigating. Historically, it was either the lack of a clearly defined policy or a policy that did not accurately reflect the strategic environment that found the Armed Forces hollow on the eve of American first battles of the twentieth-century. Both of these shortcomings informed force structure decisions that ultimately placed the United States in a position where the forces that were available were not properly suited to fight the wars of the twentieth century (Burton 2011, 15). His research into the manpower, training, and materiel aspects of the “hollow force” and the factors that influence force structure planning through the lenses of the Marine and Army as they may be effected today, provides additional context to the factors that contribute to creating the “hollow force.”

Congressional Researcher and specialist in military ground forces Andrew Feickert joined with a specialist in defense policy and budgets, Stephen Daggett, and Charles Henning, a specialist in military manpower policy, to conduct two reports for Congress in January and April of 2012. These reports provide a historical perspective on “hollow forces” and add historical context to the downsizing and restructuring of the Army (Feickert and Daggett 2012; Feickert and Henning 2012). Their research uses the Center for Naval Analysis, LTC Peyer, and other “hollow force” research from Vietnam,

through the 1980s and 1990s to provide a picture of the potential force today. They define a “hollow force” as forces that appear mission-ready but, upon examination, suffer from shortages of personnel, equipment, and maintenance or from deficiencies in training (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 1). A *Historical Perspective on “Hollow Forces”* describes the period following Vietnam as hollow due to a perceived lack of quality personnel as the Army transitioned to an All-Volunteer Force and the period in the 1990s as hollow due to steep budget cuts that degraded the capability of a highly capable force (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 2). *Army Drawdown and Restructuring: Background and Issues for Congress* is a case study of historical reductions following World War II, the Vietnam War and groups the Cold War and Desert Storm into one category and then compares to the proposals of today (Feickert and Henning 2012, 5-7). Potential issues for Congress include strategic risk, the health of the force, basing, the National Guard and Reserves, and Officer accession programs (Feickert and Henning 2012, 24-28).

Feickert and Daggett describe a “hollow force” using the same seven factors utilized in the Center for Naval Analyses report in 1996: low public support for the military, pressure to cut defense spending, difficulties in maintaining an all-volunteer force, declining pay, poor morale, delays in fielding modern armaments and equipment and inadequate attention to maintenance of existing equipment today (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 7-8). Their research additionally identifies the transition to an all-volunteer force and budgeting priorities deciding to emphasize modernization over readiness as the pre-eminent causes of the “hollow force” following Vietnam (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 15-16). The conclusion that the term “hollow force” is an unfair comparison to today’s environment is justified in the fact that many of the conditions that existed during the



1970s are not present today, however they do acknowledge that additional cuts to the budget will have major impacts on force structure but that military leaders play a significant role in determining how resources will be allocated in the future (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 19).

Defense Analysts Paul Burton and Guy Eastman placed the Department of Defense Budget under scrutiny by establishing the current expenditures and then associating proposed reductions in funding by service, program and resulting impact based on the most recent budget actions of the United States government (Burton and Eastman 2012). The analysis and conclusions highlight the significant impacts on defense spending that are planned for the near and mid-term future, specifically what procurement and research programs may be reduced altogether. A reduction in spending on modernization and technology being an indicator and one of the factors that researchers assert, leads to a “hollow force.”

Annual changes in defense spending are provided in the Army Green Book of 2012 that enable an understanding, in 2012 constant dollars, across the 20th century (DOD 2012). Implications of the current budget and its future reductions based on the 2012 Budget Act and Fiscal Year 2013 budget are in the 2012 defense analyst IHS Jane’s briefing and Changing the Business of Defense (DOD 2012, Harrison and Montgomery 2011, IHS 2012). These sources lay out the programs that are expected to be reduced beginning with the 2013 defense budget and also address the risks of reducing in these specific areas.

There exists significant rhetoric in the media about the severity and danger of defense cuts during a time of an uncertain operational environment. However, the

question of when and how to reduce defense spending as conflicts wind down is not a new phenomenon. In an era when the war in Iraq is concluded and Afghanistan is winding down, historical precedent demonstrates that budget cuts are inevitable (Korb, Conley, and Rothman 2011, 2). Some defense and budget analysts contend that the current environment may afford President Obama an unparalleled opportunity to execute a reduction in defense spending with conditions much more favorable than previous presidents following a period of conflict without creating a “hollow force” (Korb, Conley, and Rothman 2011, 1).

The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) is a document developed by the Secretary of Defense that guides the Department of Defense with a framework for transformation and focus for the next several years and drives the development of the next year’s fiscal budget and the Department’s Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP) FY 2011-2015 (DOD 2010b, 2). The purpose of the QDR is “to help shape the process for change to provide the United States with strong, sound and effective warfigthing capabilities in the decades ahead” (DOD 2006). The 2010 QDR provides the guidance for which the Army prepares itself to fight future conflicts and enables budget priorities to be established (DOD 2010b, iii). Budget priorities are one of the additional factors identified that if not in line with capabilities required, may lead to the creation of a “hollow force.” The QDR provides a consolidated document of budgeting priorities that was first created in 1997 and continues to be published every four years to enable the annual the creation of the following year’s budget.

The *National Security Strategy* (NSS) informs the nation and leaders of the Department of Defense of the priorities and focus of the President and allows the

Secretary of Defense to develop the *National Defense Strategy (NDS)* (DOD 2008, 1). This informs all of the Services of the Department of Defense of the expectations and expected focus for the near and mid-term. The NDS informs the National Military Strategy (NMS) by the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff to guide the direction of the subordinate services in their development of plans to prepare to defend the national interests (DOD 2011c). The last QDR was published in February of 2010 and was followed by the NSS of a newly elected administration in May 2010 to provide updates from the new national leadership and strategic direction while prosecuting the GWOT. Using these documents along with the annual budget provides insight and enables the search for a disparity between the capabilities required and the budget priorities that support them is an indicator of movement toward creating a “hollow force.”

President Obama and the Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, released new strategic guidance titled, *Sustaining Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*. This guidance provides updated focus as of January 2012 in the expectation of a changing global security environment, outlining the primary missions of the Armed Forces and guidance for the development of a joint force through 2020 (DOD 2012). It enabled the development of the fiscal year 2013 budget proposal, and allowed the Army to develop its budget plan based on the budget priorities. The emphasis on modernization, research and development are indicators of a potential compensation for reducing the size of the force. The debate over preparing to conduct major combat operations with COIN as an additional skill set is an enduring challenge from the post-Vietnam era. The wrestling of the importance of COIN and where it fits as an operation or a strategy continues to challenge the Army leadership, strategists and policy development

(Ackerman 2011, xx; Bacon 2012; Etzioni 2012, 45; Hammes 2012, 48-50). Krepinevich and others describe the importance of low-intensity conflict and COIN as “lessons unlearned” from the Vietnam War and continue to emphasize them as an operational capability that is required based on the lessons of the GWOT and the perceived future environment. Policy developers and planners continue to discuss the importance of these operations as an additional skill set for general purpose forces as compared to preparing and equipping a force to focus on only COIN. The failure to prioritize the required capabilities across a smaller force may create conditions that ultimately lead to factors that create a “hollow force.”

The Army Posture Statements (APS) of 2008 and 2012 describe the current environment as the Army assesses it and describes the intent to posture the Army for success through the future force of 2020 while mitigating the risk of downsizing and in a budget reduced environment (DOA 2008, DOA 2012). The Chief of Staff of the Army, Raymond Odierno expects downsizing and is working to mitigate the risk of creating a “hollow force” and the speed at which downsizing occurs (Lopez 2011; DOA 2012). He identifies the need to downsize in a controlled manner, in the right areas so as to prevent the hollowing of the force while maintaining readiness, using the rheostats of end strength/force structure, readiness, and modernization to assess and readjust throughout the process of creating a leaner Army (DOA 2012, 10). The current environment possesses varying potential threats in non-state and state actors and acknowledgment by policy developers that multiple social, religious and economic factors contribute to (Pugh 2012, 4; Thomas 2010, 94-100).

## Summary

There is general acceptance that a “hollow force” existed after the Vietnam War as the Army transitioned to an All-Volunteer Force and the consensus definition is that it is a force that lacks the required capabilities and readiness to accomplish its mission, but on the surface it appears to be mission ready. Describing the presence of a “hollow force” requires addressing the absence of capabilities, specifically personnel, training, maintenance, and the funding to support these. These factors are used by researchers Feickert and Daggett, the Center for Naval Analyses and Lt Col Peyer in very similar terms to describe the Army after Vietnam and compare them to the contemporary force at the time of their published research. Describing these capabilities through the seven factors of: low public support for the military, pressure to cut defense spending, difficulties in maintain the all-volunteer force, declining pay, poor morale, delays in fielding modern armaments and equipment, and finally inadequate attention to maintenance and existing equipment enables a uniform comparison of the generally accepted “hollow force” that followed the Vietnam War and the Army today. The Vietnam War provides the best post-conflict period to compare with today because it is widely accepted as a “hollow force” and current leaders are comparing the near term planned reductions with the period that followed Vietnam. This also provides the most generally accepted definition of the term “hollow force” used by experts from post-Vietnam to present day because it provides context to the social, economic, political and military conditions of the environment.

The reductions in defense spending are changing the structure of the force and may require even more significant changes if sequestration takes effect in January 2013.

Regardless of the severity of reductions this will change the way the Army operates in the future. Investigating the conditions that led to the creation of a “hollow force” following the Vietnam War and the current fiscal and strategic environments are critical components to analyzing where the United States Army’s capabilities may be challenged in the 21st Century.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This thesis research will be conducted using cross case pattern analysis by comparing the post-Vietnam War reductions and actions that shaped the Army and led to a “hollow force” after that conflict, with the planned reductions and changes of today’s environment. Kathleen Eisenhardt describes this method as selecting categories and then identifying similarities between the groups along with their differences, with the dimensions suggested by the research problem, existing literature, or category selection by the researcher (Eisenhardt 1989, 540-541). Eisenhardt and Bourgeois used this approach to compare CEO power differences dominating initial impressions across firms as compared with the speed of the decision process, ultimately finding the two equally important (Eisenhardt 1989, 541). Another study by the same authors divided cases to study strategic decision making into various categories such as founder run versus professional management, high versus low performance, first versus second generational product and small versus large sized firms with some results showing no clear patterns while others such as performance led to important within-group patterns and across-group differences (Eisenhardt 1989, 540). Eisenhardt cites the weakness of cross-case patterns, “as people being poor processors of information, leap to conclusions on limited data and may be overly influenced by vividness or elite respondents” (Eisenhardt 1989, 540).

This methodology was used to evaluate the theory that politics, power, and performance were linked and that political influences in the decision making process, impacted the overall performance of eight different business firms. This process

identified similarities and differences across the eight different firms, ultimately asserting that different tiers of leaders acted political when making decisions influenced the performance of the business. This methodology lends itself to identifying the similarities and differences between the post-Vietnam period and the “hollow force” that was created with today’s environment and concerns of creating a “hollow force” by establishing the theory of the seven factors that make a “hollow force” and then qualitatively determining if those factors exist today.

This approach focuses the research by identifying and using a framework to analyze the reductions that followed the Vietnam War and comparing them with the proposed reductions today. The goal of the research is to compare through the presence or lack of similar indicators and conditions for the post-Vietnam War and the post-GWOT through the same lenses.

The research will use seven factors to determine the existence of a “hollow force.” The factors were first used by the Center for Naval Analysis report, *Avoiding a Hollow Force: An Examination of Navy Readiness* conduct their study (Robinson et al. 1996, 7). These seven factors were also used in the Congressional Research Service report, *A Historical Perspective on “Hollow Forces* to give context to the concept of “hollow” as it applied to the entire force consisting of all the services (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 7-8). Both studies concluded that a “hollow force” existed during the late 1970’s following the Vietnam War. These factors were used specifically by the Center for Naval Analysis, and the Feickert and Dagget research while similar factors of people (quality, quantity, quality of life, training and leadership) and equipment (modernization, research and development, and spares) have been used when researching the “hollow force.” The



seven factors provide a recent framework that is supported closely with additional studies using different terms but the same general description of the influencing factors.

The seven factors used are:

1. Low public support for the military
2. Pressure to cut defense spending
3. Difficulties in maintaining an all-volunteer force (i.e. failure to attract and retain high quality recruits)
4. Declining pay
5. Poor morale
6. Delays in fielding modern armaments and equipment
7. Inadequate attention to maintenance and existing equipment

### Research Design

The research framework will use the seven factors to describe the characteristics of a “hollow force” with respect to the Army and not the entire Department of Defense or multiple services to distinguish it from previous studies. The research will begin with the established “hollow force” of the post-Vietnam War period and compare it to the planned post-GWOT period through comparison of the seven factors as the framework for this thesis. Additional areas of emphasis to incorporate into the seven factors data of budget priorities and the transitions to the All-Volunteer Force will be addressed within the third and sixth factors respectively.

The research results will be displayed qualitatively and quantitatively. The quantitative numbers will be displayed graphically to show the changes in spending and budgetary data as compared to today with a constant value applied to all data. Fiscal year

2012 constant dollars will be used in order to show the magnitude of the changes following the Vietnam War. The data will be displayed qualitatively through comparisons to baseline percentages or whole number changes, failure to meet minimum goals, and reductions in constant dollars from previous amounts. Force structure data will be displayed in the form of active component and reserve component Army end strength and supplemented by the number of authorized maneuver brigades prior to modularity and then BCTs for the current operational environment.

Low public support for the military will be described through polling data with the United States public providing the polling data. The data points at the conclusion and period following the Vietnam War will provide the base to compare the current public perception and polling data to. Below 60 percent of approval, respect, or confidence in the military will identify low public support for the military and is indicative of a “hollow force.”

Pressure to cut defense spending will be described through the politically directed budget priorities and the sub-categories of operations and maintenance (O&M), procurement, and research, development, testing and evaluation (RDT&E) during both post-conflict periods. Reductions in spending for the Department of Defense and then cuts in the actual Army will be presented as the actual cuts that occurred following the Vietnam War and the proposed cuts that are and will be cut based on the current proposals. Reductions in the sub-categories of the Army’s budget are indicators of a “hollow force.”

The difficulties in maintaining an all-volunteer force is described with the background of transitioning from a conscription, or primarily drafted force, to a force of

volunteers in 1973, the influence of the domestic economy and unemployment rates and the recruiting and retention numbers following the Vietnam War as compared to data today. Analysis of this factor also includes addressing the relationship between quality and quantity of the force's active and reserve component structure and size. Failing to meet recruiting and retention goals with an increasing unemployment rate in the civilian sector are indicators of a "hollow force."

Declining pay is described as military pay and compensation amounts as compared to civilian sector and the annual percentage of pay raises for both periods.

Poor morale is displayed through secondary survey data, accountability data, recruiting data, and retention data from the two periods with the poor results indicating the presence of a "hollow force." Poor results are described as 10 percent or more of the force committing offenses and failure to meet recruiting and retention goals.

A delay in fielding modern armaments and equipment is described by Army modernization programs that are delayed in the development and fielding process. Programs that are not funded, cancelled, or delayed more than 12 months are indicators of a "hollow force."

Inadequate attention to maintenance of existing equipment is portrayed as the amount of (O&M) funds in constant dollars provided to reset wartime equipment and maintain equipment across the Army. A reduction in O&M funds or the lack of adequate funds to maintain equipment, obtain repair parts, and conduct refurbishment or recapitalization programs indicate a "hollow force."

The research will begin by using the seven contributing factors to describe the "hollow force" that existed following the Vietnam War and establish a baseline for

comparison with the current environment. The research will then use defense policy, development programs, and budget documents such as the 2012 Strategic Defense Guidance, National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, National Military Strategy and the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) in addition to the 2012 Budget Appropriation Act and other supporting documents, to identify similarities and differences between the two post-conflict periods.

### Summary

The conclusions of the post-Vietnam War case study comparison determines the applicability of using the term “hollow force” to describe where the Army may be headed if the recommendations for reductions in spending and force structure are executed. Identifying the historical reductions and the resulting conditions from the post-Vietnam period and comparing them to the post-GWOT period as the Army prepares to execute current strategic defense guidance broadens the understanding of the implications of creating a “hollow force.”

The weakness of using only the Vietnam era or choosing the seven factors that caused the “hollow force” as the methodology are safeguarded against. The weaknesses are overcome by using multiple sources to confirm the validity of data and although outside the period of research, sources that include discussion of the “hollow force” that some researchers say existed in the late 1990s based on the collapse of the Soviet Union and the reductions driven by the Bottom Up Review (BUR) using the same factors. The confirmation of the factors applying to this second period of the 1990s during the research strengthens the justification in using the cross case pattern methodology and the use of the seven factors. This period will not be addressed in chapter four however it

provides confidence in the research methodology used in the thesis research. An additional weakness of cross case pattern analysis is described by Eisenhardt as the “chasm” between data and conclusions which is overcome by within case analysis, or explaining the data as it is presented and not forcing the reader to connect data to conclusions on their own by presenting each case as a stand-alone entity and then allowing cross case analysis (Eisenhardt 89, 539-540). Identifying each factor in each conflict period and explaining in detail during chapter four and then comparing them in chapter five allows the patterns to emerge in each period before comparing them together in chapter five. This technique overcomes the tendency of people to leap to conclusions based on limited data.

Identifying the historical changes that led to a “hollow force” provides insight into the possible future of the Army and analysis may conclude that the future role of the United States land component force may change.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

The comparison of the “hollow force” that resulted from actions following the Vietnam War with the currently proposed changes will enable the identification of similarities or differences to allow conclusions as to whether the United States currently has or is heading towards a “hollow force.” This comparison will be conducted by describing the post-Vietnam era “hollow force” followed by the same seven factor analysis for the projected post-GWOT era Army. This provides insight to Army planners and leaders for the near and mid-term future in a volatile operational environment.

#### Post-Vietnam

The post-Vietnam era is characterized by an American foreign policy with clear signs of popular dissent over the prosecution of that war and a lack of confidence in using the military to prosecute strategic policy (DOD XXX, 1). The persistent threat of the Soviet Union and Warsaw pact type countries allying themselves with the Soviet Union continued to dominate international policy and influence the changes following Vietnam. Fear of nuclear war in the form of World War III, uncertain future with respect to the cessation of the Russian and Chinese relationship and a reluctance to execute a war of liberation dominated the United States Policy (Taylor 1968, 1). Additional threats included large-scale conventional war using mechanized forces and the potential use of chemical and biological weapons during warfare. The United States focused the strength and attention of its political power on the problems of inflation, energy shortages, and

transition from a conscripted Army to an All-Volunteer Army, and disruptions to global political economy. The embarrassment of the Watergate scandal additionally provided challenges for the United States government as the nation reduced forces in Vietnam and looked to downsize the military. The Army was redeployed from Vietnam and began reorganizing itself for future conflicts, driven by fiscal reductions and a desire to reorganize for optimal future employment. Despite the efforts of military and civilian leaders to prevent a loss of capability following the war, a “hollow force” was created by the conditions of the post-Vietnam era.

### Low Public Support for the Military

The first of seven factors describing a “hollow force” following the Vietnam War is the public confidence and level of support for the military. Overall support for the military is indicative of low support for the Army as a subcomponent of the military and a percentage below 60 percent of confidence or acceptance demonstrates low public support. Low public support for the military reduces the willingness to invest in procurement, provide equitable pay and benefits, and hinders recruiting and retention as the Army is not perceived as valued profession without confidence in it. Survey data shows that the public reported having a great deal of confidence in the leaders of the military ranging from 27 percent in 1971, 35 percent in 1972, 40 percent in 1973, 33 percent in 1974 and 24 percent in 1975 with the confidence level remaining between 23 and 29 percent through 1980 (Harris 2011). A supplementing survey found that a sharp decline in confidence in U.S. military leadership accompanied growing American disillusionment with the war in Vietnam and 62 percent expressed a great deal of

confidence in "people running the military" in 1966 however this number declined to 32 percent by March 1973 (Allen, Samaranayake, and Brittain 2007). (see figure 1)



Figure 1. Survey data showing the level of confidence in the military leadership 1965-1973

*Source:* Jodie T. Allen, Nilanthi Samaranayake, and James Albritten, Jr., "Iraq and Vietnam a crucial difference of opinion," March 22, 2007, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/432/iraq-and-vietnam-a-crucial-difference-in-opinion> (accessed May 20, 2012).

An additional indicator is found in the Gallup poll describing the military as a whole, showing percentages of people reporting between a great deal of confidence to



quite a bit of confidence in the military just beneath 60 percent in 1975 and declining to 50 percent in 1980 (Gallup 2009). (see figure 2)

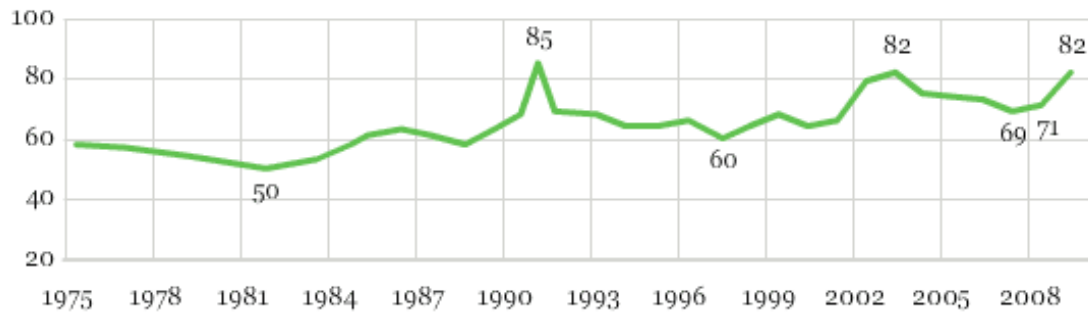


Figure 2. Survey data showing the level of confidence in the military beginning in 1975

*Source:* Gallup, “America’s confidence in military up, banks down,” June 24, 2009, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/121214/americans-confidence-military-banks-down.aspx> (accessed May 11, 2012).

This survey data shows a decrease in the level of confidence held by the American public for both the military and its leaders following the Vietnam War. The level of confidence over time appears to average around 60 percent therefore levels below 60 percent indicate low public support. Other institutions such as Congress also experienced a loss of confidence from the American public, with a decline from 42 percent to 30 percent from 1973 to 1980 (Gallup 2009). The decline in confidence with military leaders is dramatic, going well below the 60 percent level and indicating conditions of a “hollow force” while the decline to 50 percent in confidence of the overall military is less dramatic but still indicates low support. This data demonstrates the

presence of the factor of low support for the military and a contributor to creating a “hollow force.”

### Pressure to Cut Defense Spending

The second factor analyzed demonstrates the reluctance to invest in the military and particularly the Army to maintain its capabilities for use during a time of conflict (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 7-8). Reductions in the defense budget, specifically the Army’s budget, lead to an inability to pay adequately, maintain equipment, fund training and continue procurement, ultimately enabling a “hollow force” to be generated. Pressure to cut defense spending is indicated by a change in budget priorities that leads to reductions in the sub-categories of O&M, procurement, and research, development, testing and evaluation (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 8).

President Nixon promised to end the draft and war in Vietnam during his campaign that led to his election in 1968 (Korb, Conley, and Rothman 2011, 15). The post-Vietnam era forced the Army to manage a declining budget with Generals Westmoreland, Abrams, and then Weyand serving as the Chiefs of Staff. President Nixon operated a \$523 billion defense budget in 1968 during the height of the Vietnam War which was the highest since the Korean War (Korb, Conley, and Rothman 2011, 14). By 1973, he cut the defense budget by 29 percent, totaling a \$152 billion reduction, with the majority of cuts coming from military personnel, O&M, and procurement spending reductions. The table below shows the executed budgets as compared to those of President Eisenhower following the Korean War (Korb, Conley, and Rothman 2011, 15). (see figure 3)

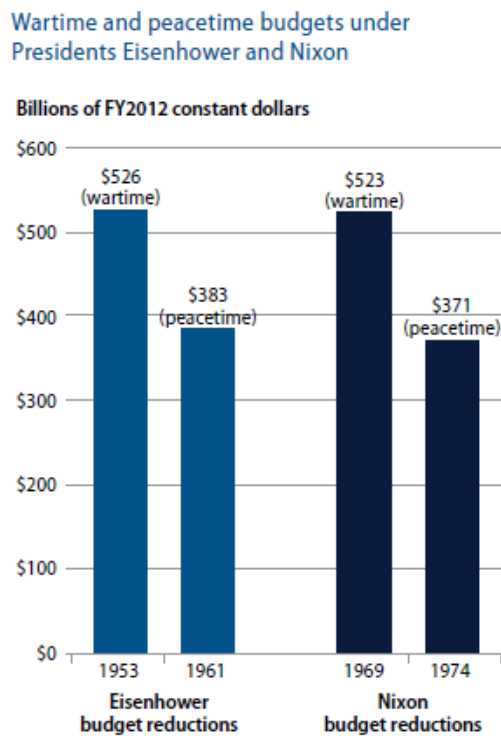


Figure 3. Comparison of Presidential Budgets, Eisenhower and Nixon.

*Source.* Center for American Progress Report, A Return to Responsibility: What President Obama and Congress Can Learn About Defense Budgets from Past Presidents, July 2011.

The reductions to the Army's budget were even deeper as compared to the overall defense budget for the period 1968 through 1973. The Army's budget shrank in fiscal year 2012 constant dollars, from \$178 billion in 1968 to \$108 billion in 1973, a reduction of over 40 percent while continuing the trend of cuts out through 1976 shows the budget at \$93 billion and an overall reduction from 1968 of 48 percent (DOA 2012, 154-155). These reductions demonstrate the presence of the second causal factor of a "hollow force."

Cutting the sub-category of O&M budget by \$33 billion dollars, or 22 percent, allowed President Nixon to use the funds from the Army budget and overall defense spending reductions to focus on domestic programs such as the Environmental Protection Agency and the Occupational Safety and Health Organization (Korb, Conley, and Rothman 2011, 16-17). Like President Eisenhower, Nixon reduced personnel, O&M, and procurement but unlike his former boss, he also cut spending for research, development, testing and evaluation (Korb, Conley, and Rothman 2011, 14-15). The cessation of the draft and the transition to an All-Volunteer Force in 1973 in light of the budgetary constraints led to the establishment of the Total Force policy where a larger emphasis was placed on the capabilities provided by the reserve component of the Army. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Creighton Abrams, testified that the Army would build itself around 16 divisions with significant reliance on reserve readiness, believing that this would help stabilize the Army and help restore both internal and external confidence (Davis 2008, 52).

This decision meant that reserve readiness would be vital to the success of the Army, because the 16-division force could not deploy without the mobilization of the Reserves and would serve as an implicit restraint on civilian policy makers when contemplating employing the military (Davis 2008, 52). The heavy reliance on reserve forces for combat support and service support included a challenge for active forces during the beginning of a major conflict until the reserves could be both mobilized and trained. However General Abrams believed increasing the reliance on the reserves would improve the assurance of public support in the event of a major conflict (Feickert and Henning 2012, 6).

While it is arguable whether funding at Vietnam War levels was no longer needed following the war, the reductions in defense spending and reductions in force size impacted the development of the big five weapon systems and modernization, equitable pay across the ranks to sustain the quality of the smaller force, and built in the requirement to invest in the reserves as the augmentation force for the active component. The reduction in spending forced the Army to decide between maintaining a ready force with appropriately funded training, available repair parts to reset the equipment used during the Vietnam War, and forced recruiting and retention programs to focus on rewarding initial entry soldiers at the expense of mid-term soldiers who had already invested their time to be half-way to retirement benefit eligibility. The pressure to cut defense spending that resulted in reductions in of the Army's overall budget and in the specific sub-categories of O&M, procurement, and research and development, testing and evaluation established conditions that enabled a "hollow force." The Commander of the U.S. Army in Europe, General Frederick Kroesen, publicly complained about the state of his forward deployed forces that faced the potential Soviet threat when he reported that one of his four divisions was "not combat ready" and that the U.S. Army in Europe had become "obsolescent" (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 5). This demonstrates the pressure to cut defense spending that resulted in a decision to sacrifice readiness in an attempt to fund the development of the big 5 weapon systems in a time of fiscal constraint and indicates a "hollow force."

#### Difficulties in Maintaining an All-Volunteer Force

Prior to the Vietnam War, the Department of Defense organized itself to fight two major theater wars with one in Europe and one in Asia and another "half war" or small-

scale contingency operation elsewhere (Daggett and Henning 2012, 5). The difficulties in maintaining the All-Volunteer Force is one of quantity and quality. The difficulty is described by in the inability to meet recruiting and retention goals, a change in the quality of soldiers based on qualification levels of recruits, and the impact of the economy through inflation and unemployment. The force must have the number of troops to adequately meet the commitments required but also have the quality of troops that are trained and capable of executing the mission.

The significant increase of manpower required to fight the Vietnam War led to a disproportionate amount of lower-income and non-college educated soldiers in its ranks through perceived unfairness in the draft due to college exemptions and draft dodging (Feickert and Henning 2012, 5-8). During his term as the Army Chief of Staff from 1968 to 1972, General Westmoreland's fought an increase in social problems in the areas of dissent, racial friction and substance abuse that led to his creation of the Office of the Special Assistant for the Modern Volunteer Army (SAMVA) in an effort to increase service attractiveness (Nielsen 2010, 38). This office was created to enable the transition from a conscripted force to an all-volunteer one and make the Army a more attractive institution for recruiting and retention. The Army's concern during the transition from the conscription Army to the all-volunteer Army was the loss and lack of quality personnel in addition to its decline in conventional war fighting capability (Feickert and Henning 2012, 2).

The Army increased its number of divisions from 13 to 16 while not increasing its overall end strength and transferring more responsibility for some critical functions to the reserve component (Nielsen 2010, 41). The active duty end strength decreased from 1.57

million in 1968 to 783,000 in 1974; however the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Creighton Abrams described this as an increase in, “tooth to tail,” in an attempt to overcome the overall 50 percent reduction in the size of the Army (Nielsen 2010, 41). While the requirement for such a large Army departed at the conclusion of the Vietnam War, the capability to fight the major regional conflict in Europe and contingency operations remained as the primary capabilities and planning factors. This reduction in active duty end strength and the accompanying reliance on the reserves became known as the Total Force Policy with two main provisions as outlined by Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird’s memorandum in 1970:

1. “Emphasis will be given to the concurrent consideration of the total forces, active and reserve, to determine the most advantageous mix to support national strategy and meet the threat.”
2. “Guard and Reserve units and individuals of the Selected Reserves will be prepared to be the initial and primary source of augmentation of the active forces in any future emergency requiring a rapid and substantial expansion of the active forces.”

Laird’s memorandum placed an increased emphasis on the role of reserve forces as it transferred the predominant combat service and support role to the reserves (Korb, Conley, and Rothman 2011, 16-17).

The 25 units serving as round out units for the active component in 1975, were made up from the increase of reserve end strength from 235,499 in 1973 to 282,696 in 1975 (Cocke et al. 1977, 58-60). By maintaining the number of divisions at 16 without increasing the overall end strength, General Abrams created the requirement to round out

divisions with the reserve component combat support and combat service support elements through mobilizing them prior to deployment. He established a relationship in resourcing the reserve component with military capability and readiness of the 16 divisions that showed that the divisions were resourced but actually would not be combat ready until the reserve component support assets were mobilized, thereby requiring political leaders to invest in their mobilization to support major operations. This appearance of readiness of 16 divisions with the addition of three more actually reduced their ability to fight without the mobilization of the reserve component, thereby creating a “hollow force.” This demonstrates the presence of the third factor, difficulties in maintaining the all-volunteer force as used by Feickert and Daggett.

The concerns with quality recruits following the cessation of the draft and transition to the All-Volunteer Force are evidenced in the active duty enlisted accession quality statistics from Fiscal Years 1973 through 1979 in the table below. The Armed Force Qualification Test (AFQT) is a subset of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery that encompasses only the math and verbal skills of the ten total subtests that make up the ASVAB and is used to determine the potential of recruits and serves as a selection measure whereas the ASVAB subtests are used for job classification purposes (Laurence 1999, 3). The AFQT categories are broken down with category I being the highest percentage scored on the AFQT and is supplemented with high school graduation data. Together, this data shows that following the implementation of the all-volunteer force, the percentage of high school graduates increased over time however the percentage of high quality recruits began to decrease significantly beginning in 1976. (see figure 4)



Fiscal Year	AFQT Category					High School Diploma Graduates (HSDG)	High Quality (I-III/HSDG)
	I-II	IIIA	IIIB	IV	All Categories*		
1973	34.3	23.6	28.0	12.7	100	65.6	42.8
1974	28.9	22.9	29.7	10.0	100	60.5	39.0
1975	35.4	26.7	29.6	6.3	100	65.2	44.5
1976	39.5	25.5	29.7	5.0	100	69.3	48.6
1977	22.0	11.7	21.3	27.1	100	71.5	27.1
1978	26.9	15.1	26.5	27.3	100	75.4	33.0
1979	23.7	14.2	27.2	32.7	100	72.1	29.3

Figure 4. Active Duty Enlisted Accessions Quality Statistics: FY 1973-1998 (percent)

*Source:* Janice H. Laurence, “Performance of the all-volunteer force” (Monograph, RAND Corporation, Arlington, VA. 1999), <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/MG265/images/webS0838.pdf> (accessed May 11, 2012).

The early years of the All-Volunteer Force displayed a significant drop in education levels and test scores among recruits, recruiting scandals to achieve required minimums in addition to an increase in bad discharges and peacetime desertions with a potential reason being that the military was not viewed as an attractive career option (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 3). The high level of inflation based on wartime spending, and reluctance to increase taxes, and the 1973 oil crisis (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 3) Compounding the issue was the reduction in budget that led to the inability of the military base pay to keep up with, and actually falling behind, the cost of living that contributed to the difficulty in accessing and retaining quality recruits (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 3). This shortage of quality recruits directly impacted the readiness of the Army over the course of the 1970s with the Army falling 15,000 short of its authorized end strength and did not meet recruiting goals for 1979 with over 40 percent of new recruits being separated for disciplinary or unsuitability reasons prior to completing their first term of enlistment (Peyer 1994, 9). This failure to maintain the quantity of soldiers

and the large departure of first term soldiers for indiscipline as an indicator of low quality demonstrate the conditions that indicate a “hollow force.” The unpopularity of the Vietnam War, transition from a conscripted force to a volunteer one in, and inflation hindered that Army’s effort to maintain the all-volunteer force. The reduction in the overall qualification and education level of recruits indicates lower quality and the failure to meet recruiting and retention goals indicates lower quantity of the Army. The inflation of the post-war economy and these difficulties in maintaining the all-volunteer force were factors that contributed to the hollowness of the force during the late 1970s.

### Declining Pay

The factor of declining pay is described as military pay and compensation amounts compared to the civilian sector. Pay and compensation that is below the civilian sector indicates the “hollow force” factor of declining pay as used by Feickert and Daggett. The decline in base pay and inflation following the Vietnam War led to an environment in the Army where the income of an E-4 with dependents in 1970 was below the United States government’s official poverty level (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 4). The Fiscal Year 1979 military budget provided military pay that lagged behind civilian sector wages by 20 percent (Peyer 1994, 8). Pay raises were targeted towards initial entry and first term soldiers to keep them in the military while mid-level non-commissioned officer were making only 30 percent more than initial entry soldiers in 1973, based on the premise that the incentive to remain in the Army after 10 years of service due to the potential for full retirement benefits after completing a full twenty years (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 4). (see figure 5).

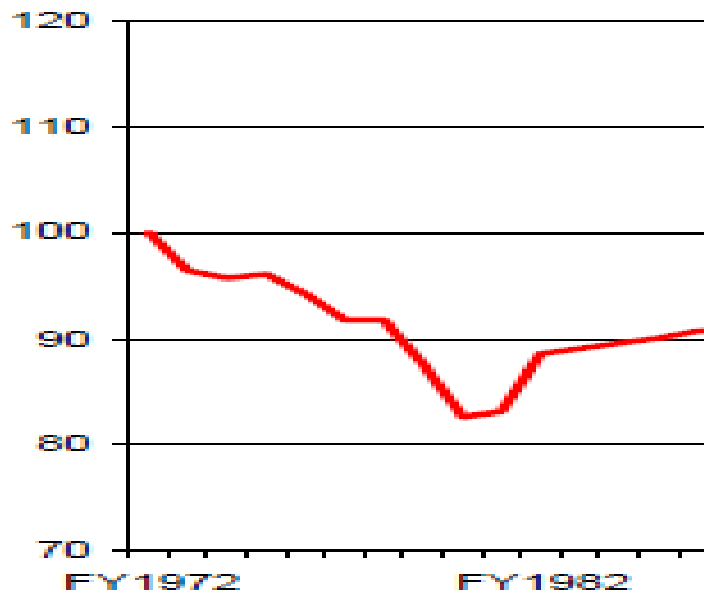


Figure 5. Cumulative Military Pay Raises, FY1972-FY1982, Indexed to the Consumer Price Index

Source: Andrew Feickert and Stephen Daggett, *A Historical Perspective on “Hollow Forces”* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2012).

The steep decline in military pay raises as compared to the consumer price index from 1972 to 1982 show the inability of the Department of Defense, and subsequently the Army as one of its subcomponents, to provide pay raises in the face of rising inflation following the Vietnam War and the institution of the all-volunteer force (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 4).

This inability to balance military pay with the civilian sector through equitable pay raises and targeting initial entry soldiers with higher benefits led to decreased morale and retention in mid-level soldiers. The presence of rising inflation negatively impacted the pay disparity between the military and civilian sectors, and demonstrated declining

military pay following the Vietnam War. This indicates that declining military pay was a factor in creating the “hollow force” that followed the Vietnam War.

### Poor Morale

Poor morale is the fifth factor leading to a “hollow force” and is exemplified following the Vietnam War by declining morale as shown by survey data, difficulties in retention, and discipline problems. Poor results are described as more than 10 percent of a 1,000 soldier population committing offenses, being absent without leave, and failure to meet recruiting and retention goals. Following the implementation of the all-volunteer force, the pay gap and erosion of benefits negatively impacted the military's ability to recruit and retain quality people. The average military wage, adjusted for inflation, dropped from \$20,000 per year in 1973 to \$14,000 by 1979. By 1979 the Army was 15,000 short of their recruiting goal and reenlistment rates fell to 11 percent below target (Peyer 1994, 9). Discipline problems such as being absent without leave, drug related offenses, and crime plagued the Army as well with close to 12 percent of soldiers committing serious offenses, demonstrating an increase from the previous rates of 2 to 3 percent (Peyer 1994, 10). Statistics for drug use, crime and unauthorized absences were less than during the Vietnam War but were still described as unacceptable by defense officials, and presented a serious problem for the Army (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 5). (see figure 6)

Calendar Year	Quarter	Absence Without Leave	Desertion	Crimes of Violence	Crimes Against Property	Marihuana Use and Possession	Other drug Offenses	Courts-Martial	Nonjudicial Punishment	Separations Less than Honorable
1971	1	47.0	19.2	1.77	18.80	2.75	2.09	8.73	52.12	4.94
	2	41.9	16.0	2.04	21.64	2.43	2.79	9.11	52.25	6.35
	3	42.8	17.2	2.19	24.32	2.03	2.96	9.00	54.45	7.42
	4	40.9	16.1	2.14	23.46	2.27	2.34	7.63	51.31	9.56
1972	1	37.9	14.1	1.92	21.64	2.79	1.99	8.03	61.67	11.15
	2	44.8	14.6	1.87	22.07	2.79	1.63	7.20	53.93	12.16
	3	40.6	12.9	1.84	22.76	3.20	1.77	5.85	57.78	9.90
	4	34.2	11.2	2.04	30.38	3.78	1.51	6.13	50.40	7.98
1973	1	43.9	13.2	2.02	19.87	5.34	1.83	7.01	57.05	7.76
	2	40.9	14.8	1.93	20.76	5.55	1.87	7.57	56.33	9.35
	3	42.9	14.4	1.99	23.27	5.98	2.21	7.42	57.71	8.83
	4	28.8	9.0	2.01	22.78	6.85	1.94	6.88	51.80	8.69
1974	1	30.1	8.8	2.04	21.70	8.59	2.24	6.85	56.49	7.79
	2	28.1	8.9	1.90	22.12	7.96	2.06	6.50	54.32	7.21
	3	28.0	8.3	2.21	22.45	7.79	1.92	6.02	52.78	7.05
	4	21.8	6.8	2.10	23.50	8.16	2.00	5.25	48.01	6.38
1975	1	22.9	5.7	2.09	21.95	8.49	2.24	5.05	57.48	5.95
	2	19.6	5.2	1.98	21.96	7.58	2.31	4.25	56.76	6.21
	3	18.8	5.0	2.14	22.72	6.11	2.06	3.88	52.24	7.47
	4	12.9	3.7	1.75	22.04	6.45	1.82	3.33	45.72	6.11
1976	1	14.2	3.2	1.65	20.44	8.61	1.61	3.18	51.87	6.05
	2	15.1	3.5	1.66	22.33	8.04	1.53	2.92	53.05	6.02
	3	16.0	4.0	1.93	22.79	8.33	1.58	2.63	56.95	5.01

Figure 6. Incident of indiscipline in the Army for 1,000 soldiers by quarter, 1971-1976.

*Source:* Karl E. Cocke, William G. Bell, John B. Corr, Romana M. Danysh, Walter G. Hermes, James E. Hewes Jr., and Thomas E. Kelly III, *Department of the Army historical summary fiscal year 1976* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History. United States Army, 1977).

The quarterly numbers of incidents per 1,000 soldiers during the given years show that following 1973 there was an increase in drug use, specifically marijuana use and possession from 1973 to 1974, indicating a decline in discipline and morale. However the other measurements of discipline over this period appear to remain constant with the exception of absences without leave, showing a decrease. The numbers show an overall picture of an Army whose standards and discipline were unacceptable according to Army leaders and needed to be corrected to retain the quality of the Army and overcome the “hollow force” (Peyer 1994).

## Delays in Fielding Modern Equipment

Preventing or delaying the fielding of new equipment is another factor that leads to a “hollow force.” Programs that are not funded, canceled, or delayed more than 12 months are indicators of the factor that leads to a “hollow force.” The period following the Vietnam War experienced a decrease in defense spending, specifically in procurement. President Nixon inherited a \$112 billion procurement budget in 1969 and reduced it to \$59 billion by 1975, a reduction of \$53 billion and 47 percent (Korb, Conley and Rothman 2011, 17). The Army’s portion of the procurement budget fell from \$30 billion to \$8 billion, a 74 percent reduction, during the same time period in an effort to cut defense spending and focus on domestic issues (Korb, Conley, and Rothman 2011, 17). The procurement cuts in the Army were almost double that of the percent for the entire Department of Defense, making the impact deeper than the other services. This lack of funding added to the creation of a “hollow force” by failing to replace weapon systems and technology that were developed in the 1950s and viewed as obsolete by Army leaders by the end of the war (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 6). General Abrams focused the modernization efforts of the Army on the “Big Five” weapon systems consisting of the M1 Abrams Tank, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the Apache helicopter, the Blackhawk helicopter and the Patriot Air Defense Missile however the era of constrained resources, they were ready for procurement in the late 1970’s but the budget fell short of the level needed to achieve production rates to replace the aging equipment currently in service (Nielsen 2010, 41; Feickert and Daggett 2012, 6). The reduction in overall defense budget following the Vietnam War was proportionate to the reduction in procurements throughout the 1970s (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 6-7) The below graph

shows the corresponding reduction in procurement overlaid on top of the reduction in defense spending to show they occurred at the same time. The differences in amounts on each vertical axis show the difference in scale. This is a comparison over time, not a comparison in amounts. (see figure 7)

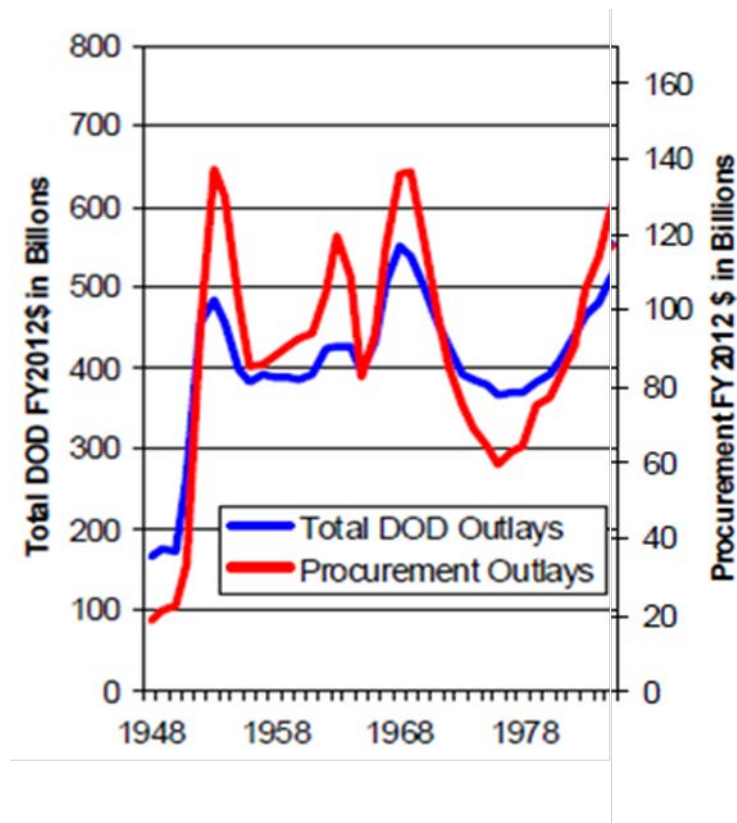


Figure 7. Trend in procurement outlays compared to trend in total national defense outlays in billions constant FY2012 dollars

Source: Andrew Feickert and Stephen Daggett, *A Historical Perspective on "Hollow Forces"* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, April 2012).

Particularly during the 1970s, procurement outlays were reduced more significantly, preventing the Army from obtaining the modern equipment that would replace the Korean War era inventory. Limited budgets delayed the procurement of new weapon systems until the late 1970s and when the budgets did begin to rise between 1976 and 1981, the leadership was forced to choose between modernization and readiness (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 8; Peyer 1994, 10). The procurement failure of the Sergeant York division air defense gun, coupled with the big five weapons programs beginning in 1972 but not having the funding and development issues delayed fielding to the Army until the 1980s (Schubert and Krauss, 2001). The M1 tank arrived at units in 1980, the Apache attack helicopter in 1983, the Patriot air defense missile in 1984 and the Bradley Fighting Vehicle not arriving in units until 1988 (Schubert and Krauss 2001). This contributed to the overall hollowness of the Army by not possessing modernized equipment or the equipment required to fight after prolonged conflict in Vietnam. The reduction in procurement and modernization during the mid-1970s forced leaders to choose where they would invest, with an inversely proportional relationship between readiness and modernization. The choice for modernization over readiness contributed to the Army being a “hollow force” following the Vietnam War.

#### Inadequate Attention to Maintenance and Existing Equipment

The final factor causing a “hollow force” is an inadequate focus on maintenance and existing equipment through O&M funds according to Feickert and Daggett. President Nixon cut the O&M budget by \$33 billion as part of the defense budget reductions following the Vietnam War (Korb, Conley, and Rothman 2011, 16). This coupled with the requirement to field 16 divisions forced the leadership to make difficult decisions that



resulted in shortages of critical equipment, an inability to repair equipment, and the unavailability of repair parts (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 5; Peyer 1994, 10). The sixteen Army divisions were divided into one in Korea, one in Hawaii, ten in the United States and four in Europe. The inability to maintain operational equipment led to six of the ten Army division in the United States and one of the four Army divisions in Europe reporting that they were “not combat ready” by 1979 (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 5).

Despite the adopting of the Total Force Policy and necessity of the Reserve Component to be ready to round out the Active Component forces in the event of major conflict as the strategic reserve, the Reserve Component units were in worse shape than the Active Component, having to make do with “hand me down” equipment from the Active Component that was not in the best condition, compounding the effects of limited training time that was considered inadequate to conduct their wartime mission (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 5). The concept of relying on the Reserve Component to round out late deploying Active Component divisions relied heavily on the capabilities and readiness of the Reserve Component. However, their reliability was in question for lack of funding and its impacts on their ability to train and maintain their equipment. Lack of reliable and maintained equipment did not help the perception of the Reserve Component as “weekend warriors” whose combat readiness was already in question (Feickert and Henning 2012, 6).

General Maxwell Taylor describes the post-Vietnam sentiment of defense policy as a, “growing resistance as a people to the role of world policeman which seems to be thrust upon us. We did not seek it, we do not want it, we do not like it. But, at the same time, our conscience reminds us of our responsibility to contribute in accordance with our

means to the maintenance of worldwide peace and stability,” (Taylor 1968, 5). The lack of public support for the military, budget constraints, poor quality and inability to retain soldiers coupled with a disparity between actual readiness and requirement in the late 1970s led the senior Army leadership to describe the Army as a “hollow force.”

### Post-Global War on Terrorism

While the GWOT is not completely ended, the research will analyze through the same methodology and seven factors the environment to determine if the Army is headed towards becoming a “hollow force.” The GWOT, defined as Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom began in the fall of 2001 and although major combat in Iraq are concluded, operations continue in Afghanistan. Their cost in dollars of the defense budget and in our nation’s ability to execute foreign policy generates discussion across the military and political leadership. The challenge of the military to continue fighting in Afghanistan while expecting significant reductions across the spectrum in the near and mid-term future have led to senior military officers and political leaders to invoke the term “hollow force.” Chief of Staff of the Army, General Raymond Odierno, commented in May 2011 while serving as the Joint Forces Command Commander that the current domestic fiscal crisis “is perhaps the greatest threat to our national security,” and warned against attempting to do more with less as this approach would lead to a “hollow force.” He additionally stated that, “we may have to do less with less. We may have to brutally accept risk where in the past we reduced risk” (Cavas 2011). We may additionally have to do without capabilities that the GWOT has enabled the funding for in the form of COIN and stability operations. The same seven factors that characterized the

“hollow force” following the Vietnam War are used in comparison to the current environment.

President Obama and Secretary of Defense Panetta released strategic guidance for the defense department titled, Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defense in January 2012 in an effort to describe the strategic environment and provide guidance for how the U.S. will operate (DOD 2012, 4). The stated goal is to provide a blueprint for the Joint Force in 2020 to guide decisions for size and shape of the force for following program and budget cycles while identifying risks. This is similar to guidance, in concept, from President Nixon following the Vietnam War and executed by the Chiefs of Staff of the Army, Abrams and Weyand from 1972 to 1976. The Army following the Vietnam War was challenged with a similar international environment and domestic environment with which to downsize in that the current Army is, making a comparison with the same seven factors all the more appropriate.

The environments are also different in that the all-volunteer force is not being created for the first time, modularity is complete, and a separate source of funding is being used for resetting the equipment used while conducting both recent operations in the form of overseas contingency operations (OCO) funds.

The strategy document articulates a challenging global security environment and states the primary missions of the U.S Armed Forces as:

1. Counter Terrorism and Irregular Warfare
2. Deter and Defeat Aggression
3. Project Power Despite Anti-Access/Area Denial Challenges
4. Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction

5. Operate Effectively in Cyberspace and Space
6. Maintain a Safe, Secure, and Effective Nuclear Deterrent
7. Defend the Homeland and Provide Support to Civil Authorities
8. Provide a Stabilizing Presence
9. Conduct Stability and Counterinsurgency Operations
10. Conduct Humanitarian, Disaster Relief, and Other Operations

The mission of deterring and defeating aggression specifies that:

the force must be capable of deterring and defeating aggression by an opportunistic adversary in one region through a combined arms campaign even when our forces are committed to a large-scale operation elsewhere. Ground forces will be responsive and capitalize on balanced lift, presence and prepositioning to maintain the agility needed to remain prepared for the several areas in which such conflicts could occur. (DOD 2012, 4)

The guidance requires flexibility in a dynamic environment, a broad range of capabilities while acknowledging that resources and force size are going to reduce and identifies the Asia-Pacific region as requiring a rebalancing of the primary focus for the United States (DOD 2012, 2). This strategic guidance is also important in taking the lessons learned from recent operations in Libya and President Obama's comments after announcing troop withdrawals from Iraq and planned withdrawals in the future when he said, "America, it is time to focus on nation building here at home" (Etzioni 2012, 45).

#### Low Public Support for the Military

Public support for the military is the first of the seven factors used to determine if a "hollow force" is in the near or mid-term future. Overall support for the military is indicative of low support for the Army as a subcomponent of the military and a percentage below 60 percent of confidence or acceptance demonstrates low public

support. A May 2010 national telephone survey conducted by Rasmussen Reports, LLC reported that 74 percent of Americans maintained a favorable opinion of the United States Military (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 15). This positive result is supplemented by the annual Gallup poll determining confidence in American institutions reported that in June of 2011, 78 percent of Americans polled possess a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the military with 16 percent reporting some confidence and three percent reporting very little or no confidence (Gallup 2011). A Harris poll shows that the American public holds the highest level of confidence in the leadership of the military as compared to other institutions, with its highest percentage of confidence coming in 2002 after American response to the attacks of September 11, 2001, declining during the surge period in Iraq, and then increasing towards 60 percent from 2008 through 2011 (Harris 2011). (see figure 8)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Change 2010- 2011
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The military	44	71	62	62	47	47	46	51	58	59	57	-2
Small business	X	X	X	X	47	45	54	47	48	50	50	0
Major educational institutions such as colleges and universities	35	33	31	37	39	38	37	32	40	35	30	-5
Medicine	32	29	31	32	29	31	37	28	34	34	33	-1
The U.S. Supreme Court	35	41	34	29	29	33	27	25	28	31	24	-7
The White House	21	50	40	31	31	25	22	15	36	27	19	-8

Figure 8. Survey data showing the level of confidence in the military beginning in 1975

*Source:* Harris, America's confidence in military up, banks down, June 24, 2009, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/121214/americans-confidence-military-banks-down.aspx> (accessed May 11, 2012).

These respected and acclaimed sources show that compared to other national institutions, the American public holds a very high level of confidence in the United States Army. Public support for the military is also evidenced in the large welcome home ceremonies in communities, organizations such as the Patriot Guard that serve to escort fallen service members and redeploying troops during ground movement along public roads, and the lack of anti-war protests. This factor does not demonstrate evidence of hollowness for the current force.

#### Pressure to Cut Defense Spending

The Department of Defense Appropriations Act of 2012 provides for a \$630.6 billion base and overseas contingency budget, with the base representing \$513 billion of the total amount, which is the same as the 2011 Budget Control Act amount which is actually a \$25.9 billion reduction from the requested amount for 2012 (HASC 2011, 1). The five priorities for the act are: Taking Care of People, Supporting Military Readiness, Protecting Our Forces, Maintaining Our Technological Edge and Improving Fiscal Accountability (HASC 2011, 1). These priorities align with the concepts of the seven factors of the “hollow force” and enable the comparison. The Army’s slice of the defense budget proposed for 2013 is divided into base and overseas contingency and totals \$184.6 billion dollars which is a reduction of \$18.3 billion from the 2012 budget of \$202.9 billion dollars and a rate of nine percent (DOA 2012). This represents a small portion of the \$450 billion the defense department is tasked to reduce over the next 10 years and is a moderate decline in budget reductions and is not a significant factor in hollowness (Lopez 2011). (see figure 9)



## FY 12 Enacted and FY 13 Budget Request

Appropriation Title	FY12 Enacted (\$M)	FY13 Request (\$M)		
	Total	Base	OCO	Total
Military Personnel	67,968.2	56,415.2	10,112.1	66,527.3
Operation and Maintenance	83,731.8	47,215.1	29,128.4	76,343.5
Research, Development, and Acquisition	30,304.6	25,653.5	2,944.5	28,598.0
Military Construction/Family Housing	4,811.0	3,377.7		3,377.7
Base Realignment and Closure/HAP	326.9	186.1		186.1
Army Working Capital Fund	155.2	60.0	42.6	102.6
Chemical Demilitarization	1,629.7	1,452.8		1,452.8
Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat	2,442.0	227.4	1,675.4	1,902.8
Afghanistan Security Forces Fund	11,200.0		5,749.2	5,749.2
Afghanistan Infrastructure Fund	400.0		400.0	400.0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>202,969.4</b>	<b>134,587.8</b>	<b>50,052.2</b>	<b>184,640.0</b>

FY 12 Enacted column combines Base and OCO funding  
Numbers may not add due to rounding

Figure 9. FY 2013 U.S.Army Budget Request, 2013

*Source:* Army FY 2013 Budget Overview Briefing, <http://asafm.army.mil/Documents/OfficeDocuments/Budget/BudgetMaterials/FY13//overview.pdf> (accessed April 6, 2012).

A significant increase in the way war is funded today is the establishment of overseas contingency operations (OCO) funds that are used to support wartime operations. The impact of the Budget Control Act of 2011 on national defense demands a re-evaluation of strategic security risk. The act requires a mandatory \$1 trillion spending reduction for the Department of Defense to be executed 2013-2021 which analysts contend amounts to a 20 percent decline in the defense budget from levels identified in the 2012 Future Years Defense Program (FYDP). These require immediate reassessment of force size and structure, procurement timelines, personnel policies, risk assessments and strategic commitments. Defense planners expected budget reductions in the realm of 6-8 percent and these expectations led the Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, to plan to reduce \$450 billion worth of defense spending over the next decade from the FYDP but

did not plan for anything beyond \$450 billion (Troutman 2012, 30-31). Demonstrating his frustration with the volatile fiscal environment and the potential budget cuts Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, testified before the House Armed Service Committee in February, “If you take another \$500 billion out of this defense budget, the strategy I just presented to you, I’d have to throw it out the window,” (Brannen 2012, 6.)

Some defense analysts propose that defense spending generated the current fiscal crisis within the United States and responsible defense cuts are part of the solution. The national budget should influence the capabilities and requirements of our national policy without sacrificing security as we focus on internal issues of the economy, infrastructure, and global politics. The proposed 9 percent reduction to the Army’s budget for fiscal year 2013 is much smaller than the 48 percent decrease during the period of 1968-1976 and may be considered light cuts to the Army’s budget. However the impacts of sequestration can only be projected to depict the ultimate reduction to the Army’s budget for 2013 and beyond. Sequestration requires an additional \$500 billion in reductions through 2021 on top of the \$487 billion over the next 10 years (Burton and Eastman 2012, slide 6). The impacts on the defense budget and the Army could double from nine percent to eighteen percent as the Army’s budget makes up 25.6 percent of the department of defense’s 2013 budget and expects to maintain the same amount in the future (Burton and Eastman 2012, slides 6, 8 and 11). (see figure 10)



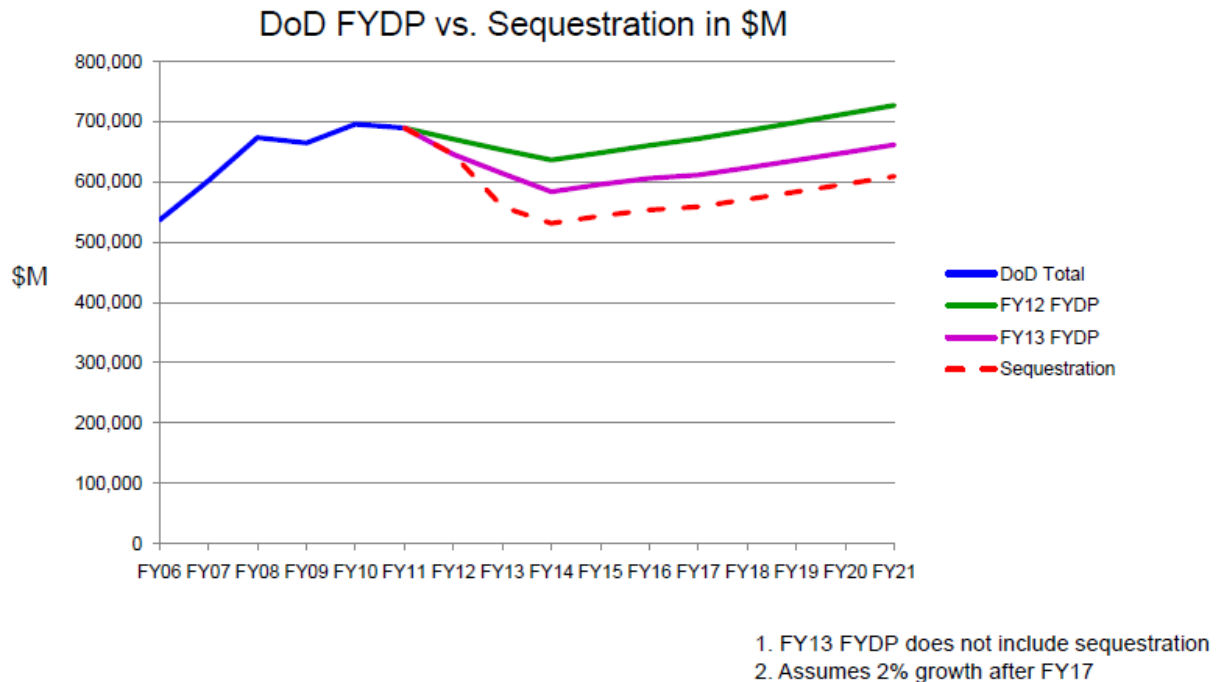


Figure 10. DoD Fiscal Year Defense Plan versus Sequestration in Millions of Dollars

*Source:* Paul Burton and Guy Eastman, U.S. DOD Budget: Strategy/Budget/Projections *DoD in the Crosshairs*, IHS Aerospace and Defense, Jane’s JDB/JDSF Team Brief, February 29, 2012.

The possibility of sequestration on top of the planned nine percent reduction with beginning in January 2013 does show pressure to reduce spending and is evidence a factor that leads to a “hollow force.”

#### Difficulties in Maintaining an All-Volunteer Force

The difficulty in maintaining the all-volunteer force is one of quantity and quality. The difficulty is described by the inability to meet recruiting and retention goals, a change in the quality of soldiers based on qualification levels of recruits, and the impact of the economy through inflation and unemployment. The force must have the number of troops to adequately meet the commitments required but also have the quality of troops

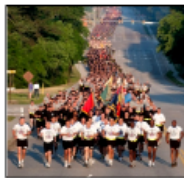
that are trained and capable of executing the mission. The strategic guidance asserts that the United States is committed to sustaining the all-volunteer force as its top priority as the military changes in the future. The 2010 *QDR* requires the United States ground forces to remain capable of conducting full spectrum operations and the ability to conduct effective and sustained COIN, stability and counterterrorist operations both alone and with partners. The *QDR* maintains two objectives: the first is to rebalance the capabilities of the U.S. Armed Forces and institutionalize successful wartime innovations to prepare for a complex future and the second objective is to reform (DOD 2010b, xvi). The *QDR* provided guidance for structuring the Army through the Fiscal Years 2011-2015 Future Years Defense Program (DOD 2010b, 2). The FY 2011-2015 FYDP directed the Army to organize with four Corps headquarters, 18 division headquarters and 45 active component BCTs with a mix of infantry, Stryker and heavy BCTs to provide this versatility in addition to 21 combat aviation brigades providing mobility, sustainment and fires capabilities to compliment the three types of BCTs (DOD 2010b, xvi). The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Odierno has recently revealed that the number of Active Component BCTs will go down to 32 and that they will be regionally focused to enable specific training and resourcing. This is the established quantity required to maintain the all-volunteer force but the concern is quality. The Army exceeded its recruiting and retention goals for fiscal year 2011 and will leverage technology, partnerships through coalitions and NATO when executing operations in the future based on a smaller U.S. force available, and committed to non-military and military to military cooperation to address instability in the future. The U.S. will not be built or manned to execute large-scale and prolonged stability operations in the future (DOD 2012, 5-6). These measures

in the 2012 strategic guidance address the issue of quantity as the force reduces in overall end strength by 112,000 from fiscal year 2011 to 2017, a reduction of 14 percent (Burton and Eastman 2012, slide 6).

To prevent the creation of a “hollow force”, the new concept to retain quality is the idea of reversibility, and is introduced in the 2012 *APS*. Reversibility will structure and pace reductions in the Nation’s ground forces in a way that preserves the ability to make a course change to surge, regenerate and mobilize the capabilities needed for any contingency (DOA 2012, 7). The reductions are planned to move slowly over the next five years in the event a larger Army is needed for a contingency or major combat operation in the near term future. Another new concept to retain quality of the all-volunteer force and prevent creating a “hollow force” is expansibility, which according to the 2012 *APS*, means protecting the Army’s ability to regenerate capabilities that might be needed to meet future demands, maintaining intellectual capital, and rank structure that could be called upon to expand. This requires reexamining the mix of active and reserve components, maintaining a strong National Guard and Army Reserve, retaining a healthy cadre of experienced noncommissioned and midgrade officers, and preserving the health and viability of the Nation’s defense industrial base. (DOA 2012, 7). These concepts to retain the quality of the active force and address the risk of downsizing through reversibility and expansibility require more reliance on the reserve component, a seemingly similar concept to one that followed the Vietnam War. Although no exact plan for the mix of active and reserve components to create this balance, the effort to retain the capabilities gained by experience in the mid-grade non-commissioned officers and

officers as the intellectual capital shows the effort to maintain the quality in the right quantity by preventing the creation of hollowness.

The dynamic and complex security environment challenges the current structure of the Army in an expected future of fiscal austerity. The Fiscal Year 2013 budget request requires the Army to reduce its Active Duty End Strength from 562,000 to 552,000, with an eventual reduction to 490,000 by 2017 (Burton and Eastman 2012, Slide 13). This reduction still holds the active duty end strength above 2001 levels but more analysis by defense experts will determine the correct force mix based on the required capabilities. (see figure 11)



## Military Personnel Summary

Budget Request (\$M)	FY 12 Enacted	FY 13 Request		
	Total	Base	OCO	Total
Active Army	50,181.7	40,777.8	9,165.1	49,942.9
Army National Guard	8,215.5	8,103.2	583.8	8,687.0
Army Reserve	4,485.7	4,513.8	156.9	4,670.7
Medicare-Elig Ret Health Care Fund	5,085.3	3,020.4	206.3	3,226.7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>67,968.2</b>	<b>56,415.2</b>	<b>10,112.1</b>	<b>66,527.3</b>

### ❖ Active and Reserve Component end strength to support the National Defense Strategy

- 490,000 Active Component enduring end strength funded in the Base
- 49,700 non-enduring AC end strength in support of ongoing operations funded in OCO (Temporary End Strength Increase ends in FY 2013)
- 12,400 Temporary Endstrength Army Medical (TEAM), to support Soldiers in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System, funded in the Base
- Total Reserve Component force of 563,200

Authorized End Strengths	FY 12	FY 13
Active Army	562,000	552,100
Army National Guard	358,200	358,200
Army Reserve	205,000	205,000

*Numbers may not add due to rounding*

- ❖ Military pay raise of 1.7%; increased allowances (+3.9% housing and +3.4% subsistence)
- ❖ Incentives to recruit and retain the All-Volunteer Force (recruiting and retention bonuses, education benefits, and loan repayment)
- ❖ In OCO, Active Component funds full pay and allowances for Reserve Component personnel on active duty (average 38,600), and special pays and subsistence for all deployed Army forces; Reserve Components fund pre- and post-mobilization training and support

6

Figure 11. FY 2013 U.S. Army Budget Request, 2013

Source: Army FY 2013 Budget Overview Briefing, <http://asafm.army.mil/Documents/OfficeDocuments/Budget/BudgetMaterials/FY13//overview.pdf> (accessed April 6, 2012).

Eliot Cohen describes the debate over force structure as Generals and Admirals fretting over forces stretched too thin and anticipating threats from unconventional and irregular opponents who seek to avoid our strengths and identify our weaknesses justifies significant military strength to combat new threats (Cohen 2004, 53). However, Cohen also warns that the United States cannot sustain itself by raw military power but must have the sufficient resource to generate such power (Cohen 2004, 53). The concepts of reversibility and expansibility are the Army leadership's attempt to identify, accept, and mitigate the risk of reducing the size of the force while retaining its quality, even if some components are moved into the reserve component and would have to be mobilized for future conflicts. The risk involved is the potential loss of experience base with the reduction in force resulting in a loss in quality. There is no evidence that supports the creation of paper units where the capability appears to be present however when reversed or expanded in a time of need it is not there. The future mix of active and reserve components will determine if this does lead to a "hollow force."

The challenge of retaining the quality soldiers with the experience of combat and not forget the lessons of fighting against an irregular opponent is addressed by the 2012 *APS*. The future environment is uncertain and if a contingency arises, the Army plans to halt the downsizing and change the course to mobilize and meet future threats without becoming a "hollow force" (DOA 2012, 7).

Modularity and downsizing continue to challenge force structure planning, especially with the recent announcement that Army will reduce the number of BCTs from 45 down to 32 (Bacon 2012). Inside this reduction is a reorganization to build a third maneuver battalion and an engineer battalion within each brigade in addition to each

brigade being aligned to a specific region with focused responsibilities beginning in 2014 (Bacon 2012). This additional capability enables a BCT with more combat power and capability. It is a reduction in the overall number of BCTs but with an improvement in the capability, therefore this does not indicate hollowness.

Recent recruiting trends show that the Army is meeting both its quantity and quality goals with virtually all recruits having high school diplomas and almost 75 percent scoring above average on the AFQT (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 16). A major component of reaching the smaller end strength in the future is reducing the overall number accessed into the Army from the 75,000 to 80,000 enlisted soldiers per year to 60,000 to 75,000 soldiers (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 16). This will require a balance of experience and training while allowing for promotions with a similar reduction in recruiting and enrollment through commissioning sources at West Point and through Reserve Officer Training Corps programs (Feickert and Henning 2012, 13-15). Retention of quality soldiers is also another key concern with reduction planning that is addressed in the 2012 *APS* by emphasizing the importance of retaining key leaders and intellectual capital of the Army so that the institutional knowledge and experience of the last decade of conflict are not lost (DOA 2012, 7; IHS 2012, Slide 16). Other means to retain quality soldiers by allowing volunteers to depart the Army through an accelerated voluntary retirement incentive for eligible service members with 20-29 years of service being afforded incentive pay to retire from service, with a similar program of voluntary separation for soldiers with between 6 and 20 years of service and special separation bonuses for service members with at least 6 years but less than 20 years (Feickert and Henning 2012, 13-14). Involuntary retirement and reduction in force are the two

involuntary programs that may be enacted if accessions and voluntary programs do not enable adequate reductions (Feickert and Henning 2012, 14). These trends indicate that the retained quality is the correct quantity therefore conditions are not causing the creation of a “hollow force” at least in terms of quality.

Current Chief of Staff General Odierno states that the reduction in active duty end strength places a greater reliance on the National Guard and Reserves, “particularly if the United States gets into two major long-term combat operations at the same time” and that there will be increased readiness requirements for the reserves need to be developed (Baldor 2012). There is potential for smaller budgets and a smaller Army to improve the overall quality of the force based on retaining the best qualified and capable soldiers to continue serving. This statement by the current Chief of Staff is very similar to the efforts of Generals Abrams and Weyand as they served as the Chief of Staff following the Vietnam War and the Total Force policy was developed.

The concepts of reversibility and expansibility identify the risk in reducing the size of the Army and an attempt to prevent the reduction in the quality of the force. The reliance on the active component will require additional resources to maintain the readiness level with respect to training and maintenance of the reserve component, in addition to retention incentives to ensure the required mix of quality soldiers are retained in the active and reserve components. The details of how this is going to occur and the budget requirements are not developed yet. There is no change to legislation that supports the increased reliance on the reserve component or changes to mobilization requirements, both of which must be addressed in the force mix plan development. Previous wars demonstrate a need for increased quantity sometimes at the expense of the quality.

Reversibility and expansibility may aid in preventing the need to return to a draft like mechanism when a larger force is needed but only the full development of the active to reserve component force mixture and time will provide results for analysis of their effectiveness in preventing the creation of a “hollow force.” The key to success during our current and near term future periods will be the controlled reduction and movement of capabilities into the reserve components or else the same fate of creating a “hollow force” may result. The factor of difficulties in maintaining an all-volunteer force is not currently present however may be challenged in the future.

### Declining Pay

The factor of declining pay is described as military pay and compensation amounts compared to the civilian sector. Military basic pay has increased nearly 35 percent over the last ten years and is substantially higher when the benefits of housing and subsistence allowances, enlistment and re-enlistment bonuses are added (Henning 2011). Increases in retirement benefits by adding Tricare for Life medical benefits with retired pay and veterans disability benefits results in military compensation increasing by over 55 percent above inflation since fiscal year 1998 (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 16). The question is over what kinds of pay and benefit increases are best for improving recruiting and retention to maintain the quality required in the post-GWOT Army. Recent across-the-board pay raises and ones targeted by grade, years of service, and occupational skill will enable the focused retention of the mid-career intellectual capital the Army expects to target according to the 2012 *APS*. The benefits such as housing, health care, and installation services are also key areas for potential reduced spending. The issue of pay comparability between military and civilian pay, commonly referred to as the “pay



gap,” continues to receive emphasis with the Army using its own method of computation, being that soldiers will be paid at the 70th percentile in terms of pay and benefits of their civilian counterparts (Henning 2009). (see figure 12)

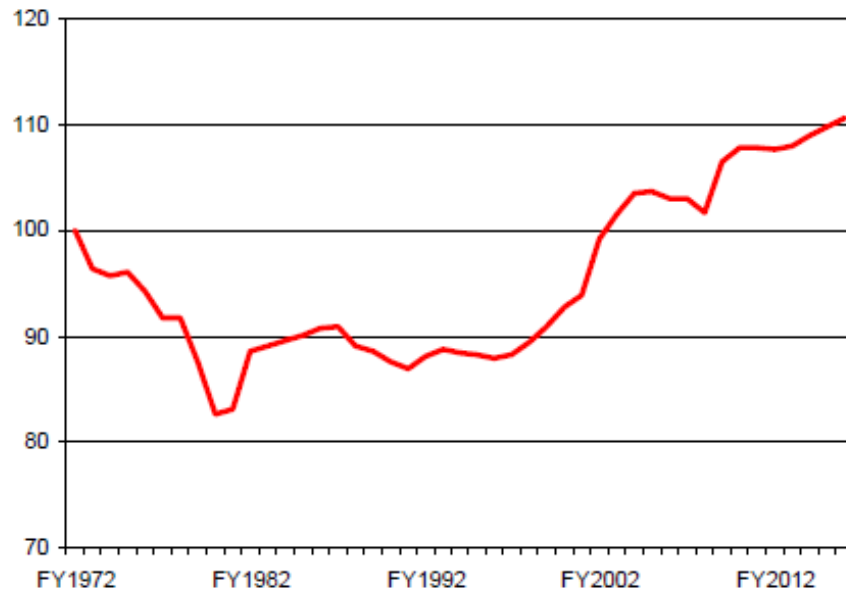


Figure 12. Cumulative Military Pay Raises, FY1972-FY2016, Indexed to the Consumer Price Index

*Source:* Andrew Feickert and Stephen Daggett, *A Historical Perspective on “Hollow Forces”* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2012).

There does not appear to be an issue with declining pay with the current policies. However, discussion in congress and amongst senior military leaders of reducing retirement benefits and increasing medical payments could have negative impacts, leading to a decline in morale, recruiting and retention issues, and ultimately degrade the overall quality of the Army. While there is no legislation currently that directs the

execution of targeted reductions in these areas, they may be used as a cost saving measure, and not specifically pay cuts in the future. Due to current levels of military pay and the trend in military pay raises as compared to the civilian sector, the factor of declining pay is not currently present and is not creating conditions for a “hollow force.”

### Poor Morale

The factor of poor morale is described as more than 10 percent of a soldier population committing offenses, being absent without leave, and failure to meet recruiting and retention goals indicating the conditions that lead to a “hollow force.” Recent studies indicate that morale may be low do to multiple and extended combat tours and magnified by close combat however indicators also report that troops are more willing to seek help when struggling mentally or emotionally (Mulrine 2011). The fact the Army met its retention goals for fiscal year 2010 seems to challenge the fact that overall morale is low however the challenging domestic economy may also make the Army seem like an attractive occupation when compared with rising inflation rates, unemployment, and the volatility of housing and gas prices. There is also real potential and an expectation for morale to improve once deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan are no longer required, removing the underlying cause of stress and low morale in the Army (Feickert and Henning 2012, 16-17).

Another indicator that morale may be poor is the inability to meet recruiting and retention goals. However the Army exceeded its fiscal year 2011 recruiting goals by accessing 64,019 new soldiers while the goal was 64,000 and exceeded its retention goals in all categories (DOD 2011d). This is an indicator that morale is not poor and does not support the creation of a “hollow force.”

Discipline is an indicator of poor morale and can be analyzed through the number of crimes and the instances of drug abuse. (see figure 13)

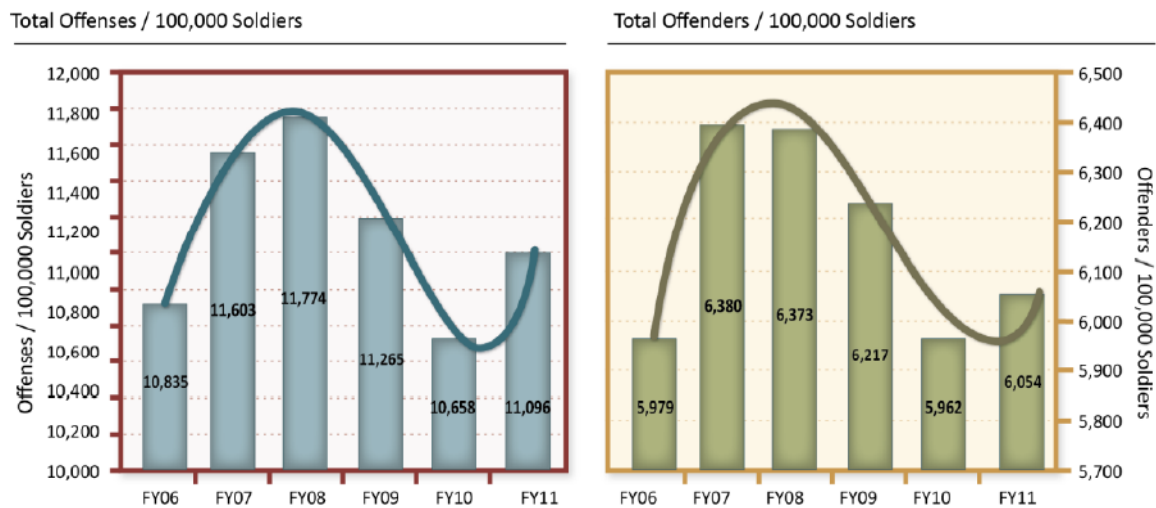


Figure 13. Criminal Offenses for fiscal years 2006-2011

*Source:* Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army 2020 generating health and discipline in the force ahead of the strategic reset report for 2012 (Washington, DC. Government Printing Office. 2012).

The statistics in figure 13 show a peak in fiscal year 2007 and 2008 during the period when the highest operational tempo to support Operation Iraqi Freedom may have influenced discipline problems and stressed troop morale. Although the number of offenders and offenses per 100,000 soldiers fell in 2010, it increased again during 2011, indicating that troop morale may be low and potentially create conditions that could cause a “hollow force.” This increase could also be reflective of the surge in Afghanistan that led to the spike during 2007 and 2008 when troop levels and deployments increased to support the surge in Iraq.

Another sub measurement of discipline and potential indicator for poor morale are the number of misdemeanors and drug crimes. (see figures 14 and 15)

Crime Categories	FY11 Offenses	Offenses Per 100,000	Percent Composition
Drug Crimes	11,265	1,597	40%
Failure to Obey General Order	6,173	875	22%
Desertion	1,939	275	7%
Larceny	1,776	252	6%
Government Property/Funds	1,068	151	4%
Private Property/Funds	708	100	3%
Other Sex Crimes	977	139	3%
Drunk Driving with Personal Injury	76	11	0%
Other Non-Violent Felonies	6,083	862	22%
<b>Total - Non-Violent Felony</b>	<b>28,289</b>	<b>4,011</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 14. Non-Violent Felony Offenses for fiscal year 2011.

*Source:* Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army 2020 generating health and discipline in the force ahead of the strategic reset report for 2012 (Washington, DC. Government Printing Office. 2012).

Crime Categories	FY11 Offenses	Offenses Per 100,000	Percent Composition
Traffic Violations	22,689	3,217	48%
Assault and Battery	5,126	727	11%
AWOL	4,316	612	9%
Drunk Driving without Personal Injury	3,932	557	8%
Family Abuse	2,771	393	6%
Drunk and Disorderly	2,234	317	5%
Other Misdemeanors	6,094	864	13%
<b>Total - Misdemeanor</b>	<b>47,162</b>	<b>6,686</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 15. Misdemeanor Offenses for fiscal year 2011.

*Source:* Headquarters, Department of the Army, Army 2020 generating health and discipline in the force ahead of the strategic reset report for 2012 (Washington, DC. Government Printing Office. 2012).

These statistics show that there is a substantial amount of drug crimes, AWOL offenses, and drunk driving without damage to personal property that show a level of indiscipline in the force. LTG Hertling, Commander of U.S. Army Europe recently stated that discipline has deteriorated to the point where it risks becoming “cancerous” (Burns 2011). These discipline problems are indicators that there may be lower levels of morale in the Army and set conditions for the creation of a “hollow force.” The discipline problems are indicators that there may be lower levels of morale in the Army however the retention and recruitment of the quantity and quality of soldiers make for inconclusive results for this factor in creating conditions for the presence of a “hollow force” and will require additional analysis as support to Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan is reduced over the next two years.

## Delays in Modern Fielding and Equipment

Delaying the fielding of new equipment is another factor that leads to a “hollow force” and is described by modernization programs that are not funded, canceled, or delayed more than 12 months providing indicators of the factor that leads to a “hollow force.” The 2013 Budget may demonstrate some significant changes to current funding programs based on the current budget and the prospect of sequestration beginning in calendar year 2013. The major programs to be affected by a large reduction would be the family of medium tactical vehicles used for tactical troop transport and resupply, the high mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV) recapitalization program designed to refurbish the existing light wheeled vehicle fleet and the guided multiple launch rocket system (GMLRS) missiles (IHS 2012, Slide 15). The delaying of the current Ground Combat Vehicle Program and the helicopter modernization are other significant changes in addition to forgoing the joint air ground missile for the existing hellfire II missile and cancelling the joint tactical radio system in search of a more cost-effective solution (IHS 2012, Slide 15). (see figure 16)

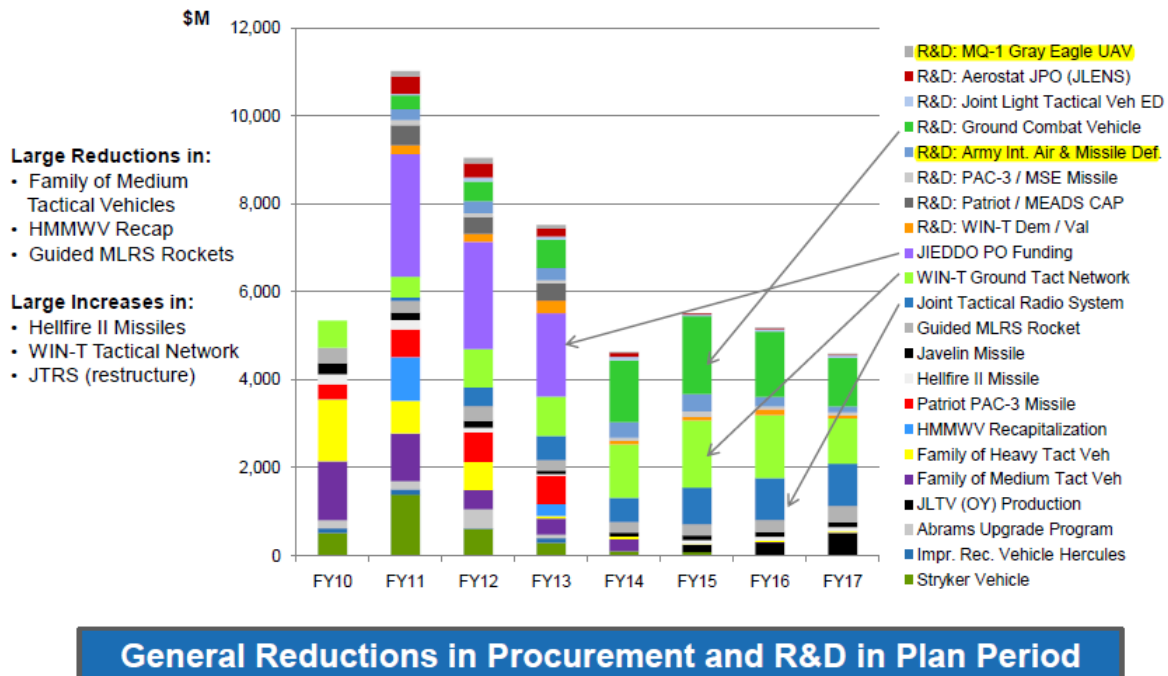


Figure 16. General reductions in procurement and research and development fiscal years 2010-2017

Source: Paul Burton and Guy Eastman, U.S. DOD Budget: Strategy/Budget/Projections *DoD in the Crosshairs*, IHS Aerospace and Defense, Jane's JDB/JDSF Team Brief, February 29, 2012.

Statistics above show reductions in wheeled vehicle fleet programs and multiple launch rocket systems while there is an overall increase in missile defense and unmanned aerial systems. These reductions are indicators of a change in resourcing priorities.

The Army's 2013 budget request states its priorities for investment in ground systems include the Network, the Ground Combat Vehicle (GCV), the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV), the Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicle and the Paladin Integrated Management Program (DOA 2012b, 18). These priorities are as of the February 2012 budget request for fiscal year 2013 and do not account for impacts or changes based on sequestration.

President Obama's budget request supports a large investment in unmanned aerial systems such as the RQ11 Raven (IHS 2012, Slides 12-14). The Stimson Center reports that over the last decade, the military has taken serious advantage of increased procurement funding and has been able to substantially modernize, specifically the M1 Abrams tank, the M-2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the majority of support vehicles and the small arms inventory (Rumbaugh 2011). The Army's aviation fleet is scheduled for modernization, with the UH-60 Blackhawk, AH-64 Apache, OH-58 Kiowa, and CH-47 all due for modernization efforts however the fiscal year 2013 budget proposal includes a change to the budget priorities and delays the modernization programs for three to five years (Burton and Eastman 2012, slides 13 and 14). (see figure 17).

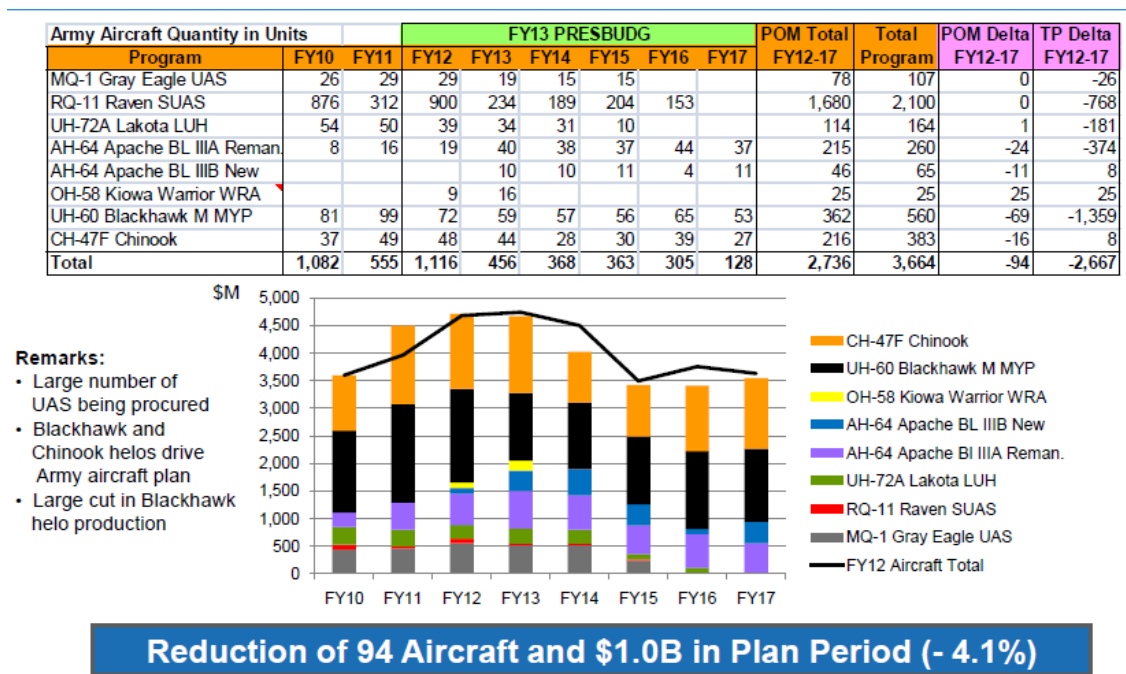


Figure 17. Army Aircraft Procurement 2010-2017

Source: Paul Burton and Guy Eastman, U.S. DOD Budget: Strategy/Budget/Projections DoD in the Crosshairs, IHS Aerospace and Defense, Jane's JDB/JDSF Team Brief, February 29, 2012.



These rotary wing assets continue to support operations in Afghanistan but this delay and a reduction in UH-60 Blackhawk, UH-72 Lakota, and AH-64 Apache production demonstrate a delay and a cancellation of modernization efforts. These changes are focused on specific programs that are expected to be more important in a resource constrained environment based on expected requirements and changes in the strategic defense guidance toward asymmetric threats and deterrence but still demonstrate a delay to modernization efforts. The changing in priorities in funding programs, although not a sweeping and across the board reduction, does delay modernization efforts of a number of programs therefore it does demonstrate the presence of this factor that creates the conditions of a “hollow force.”

#### Inadequate Attention to Maintenance and Existing Equipment

The final factor causing a “hollow force” is an inadequate focus on maintenance and existing equipment through O&M funds according to Feickert and Daggett. The presence of this factor is described as the amounts of O&M funds in constant fiscal year 2012 dollars provided for resetting equipment with a reduction or lack of sufficient funds to maintain equipment, obtain repair parts, and conduct refurbishment or recapitalization programs indicate a “hollow force.” Through the defense budget, Congress has placed a significant emphasis on resetting the military’s equipment in order to repair the equipment used to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan but affords latitude in how the Army spends its O&M budget, leaving the Army to determine how it resets the equipment. Additionally, the overseas contingency operations budget, of which \$30 million is requested for O&M in the fiscal year 2013 request, has provided the primary source of reset expenditures (Feickert and Daggett 2012, 17; DOA 2012).

The Army also plans to utilize its requested fiscal year 2013 budget to continue modernizing the M1 Abrams tank, the M2 Bradley infantry fighting vehicle, and the Stryker fighting vehicle (Feickert and Henning 2012, 23; Burton and Eastman 2012, slide 15). The M1 and M2 are found only in the Heavy BCTs and the changing focus towards the Asia-Pacific region in accordance with the 2012 Strategic Defense Guidance may require a change and enable a re-prioritization of funding if the need for both heavy vehicles is not as great as originally determined. Due to the fact that the Army maintains flexibility to determine where it spends funds to maintain and reset equipment, the factor of inadequate attention to maintenance of existing equipment is not present today and does not create the conditions of a “hollow force.”

### Summary

The use of the seven factor model to compare the conditions that lead to the creation of a “hollow force” following the Vietnam War with the current environment identified several differences and similarities between the two periods. The seven factors that characterized the “hollow force” following the Vietnam War and the conditions that existed with respect to each factor are provided for comparison with the same seven factors in today’s environment. Not all factors were applicable to the post-GWOT and will be compared in detail in the next chapter; however the results are summarized below.

The factors of low public support for the military, declining pay, and inadequate attention to maintenance of existing equipment do not apply to the current environment and the near to mid-term future.

The factor of pressure to cut defense spending is not a factor based on the fiscal year 2013 budget request however the full impacts of sequestration potentially doubling

the percentage of reductions will make it a factor if they occur as planned in January 2013.

The factor of difficulties in maintaining an all-volunteer force does not apply currently however the concepts of reversibility and expansibility are not fully developed therefore could allow for the creation of the conditions of a “hollow force.”

The factor of poor morale is inconclusive as the Army is meeting current recruiting and retention goals however there are discipline problems that may continue to rise and demonstrate that poor morale is a factor in the future.

The factor of delays in fielding modern armaments and equipment is a factor currently in creating a “hollow force.”

The factor of inadequate attention to maintenance of existing equipment is not a factor as the Army controls where maintenance funds are allocated.

The next chapter will make detailed comparisons between the post-Vietnam period and the post-GWOT period, ultimately offering conclusions as to validity of creating a “hollow force” in the near and mid-term future.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

In the past, such as after the Vietnam War, our government applied cuts to defense across the board, resulting in a force that was undersized and underfunded relative to its missions and responsibilities. This process has historically led to outcomes that weaken rather than strengthen our national security-and which ultimately cost our Nation more when it must quickly rearm to confront new threats. I am determined not to repeat the mistakes of the past.

— Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, 3 August 2011

The Army experienced conditions that created a “hollow force” following the Vietnam War according to the seven factors used by Feickert and Daggett and the Center for Naval Analyses. The term “hollow force” is being used by military and political leaders to describe the potential future of the Department of Defense and specifically the Army if reductions in budget and force structure occur too swiftly and without precision. Determining if the theory of the “hollow force” that followed the Vietnam War still applies today is the primary research question of this thesis and is compared by the seven factors to determine if the hypothesis that the theory applies today, is true.

The operational environment and domestic influence on the future of the Army is driving military leaders to advise caution to political leaders and resurrected the term “hollow force” to characterize the potential force if significant downsizing and budget reductions are made. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Raymond Odierno expressed his concern about budget reductions and their impact on the Army at an Association of the United States Army meeting on October 11, 2011 when saying, “A cut of this magnitude would be devastating, this would threaten every aspect of the joint

force, and especially the Army—its force structure, modernization efforts and ability to sustain an all-volunteer force, as well as our defense industrial base.” General Odierno goes on to acknowledge that the Army will get smaller as a matter of fiscal reality and going too fast risks the future readiness of the force and flexibility to react in an uncertain environment (Lopez 2011). This comment by the current Chief of Staff of the Army demonstrates the concern for the speed, method, and depth for which the Army will downsize for fear of creating another “hollow force” like the one that existed following the Vietnam War.

The conclusion of the research leads to a rejection of the hypothesis that the theory of a “hollow force” applies today. The data and analysis show that the current and near-term Army fails to meet four of the seven factors as criteria. One factor does not meet the criteria currently however is expected to meet the criteria in January 2013, and one factor is inconclusive based on the definition and description of the factor. Therefore, the Army is not a “Hollow” Army and more research is required. (see table 1)

Table 1. Comparison of the seven factors of a “hollow force”

TABLE 1. COMPARISON OF THE SEVEN FACTORS OF A "HOLLOW FORCE"			
FACTOR	POST-VIETNAM	POST-GWOT	REMARKS
Low Public Support for the Military	YES	NO	
Pressure to Cut Defense Spending	YES	NO*	"YES" if sequestration takes full effect in January 2013
Difficulties in Maintaining an All-Volunteer Force	YES	NO*	Reversibility and expansibility not fully developed
Declining Pay	YES	NO	
Poor Morale	YES	Inconclusive	
Delay in Fielding Modern Armaments and Equipment	YES	YES	
Inadequate Attention to Maintenance of Existing Equipment	YES	NO	

*Source:* Created by author.

The first of the seven factors is low public support for the military and is determined by polling data with below 60 percent approval, respect, or confidence

indicating conditions of a “hollow force.” The post-Vietnam era was a “hollow force” because the confidence level never reached higher than 40 percent from 1971 to 1980 according to a Harris poll and according to a Gallup poll, declined from 60 percent in 1975 to 50 percent in 1980. Low public support for the military is not present today because a 2011 Rasmussen report indicates a 74 percent confidence level in the military and a Gallup poll supplements this fact by reporting that 78 percent of Americans have either a great deal of confidence or quite a lot of confidence in the military. This data does not demonstrate that low public support is a factor today.

The second of seven factors is pressure to cut defense spending and is described as politically directed budget priorities and the sub-categories of O&M, procurement, and research and development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E). Reductions in defense spending in these sub-categories indicate conditions that lead to a “hollow force.” The Army’s budget shrank in fiscal year 2012 constant dollars, from \$178 million in 1968 to \$108 million in 1973, a reduction of over 40 percent and continued to be reduced out through 1976 with the budget dropping to \$93 million and an overall reduction from 1968 to 1976 of 48 percent. The sub-category of O&M budget was also reduced by \$33 billion dollars, or 22 percent, in addition to cuts in procurement and research, development, testing and evaluation that created the conditions for a “hollow force.” The budget proposed for 2013 is of \$184.6 billion dollars is a reduction of \$18.3 billion from the 2012 budget of \$202.9 billion dollars and a rate of nine percent but this represents a small portion of the \$450 billion the defense department is tasked to reduce over the next 10 years and is a moderate decline in budget reductions, therefore not a factor in creating hollowness. However the impacts of sequestration that will begin in January 2013

requires an additional \$500 billion in reductions through 2021 that could double the percentage of reduction from nine percent to eighteen percent and demonstrate a more significant impact as a condition that leads to a “hollow force.” Currently pressure to cut defense spending based on the fiscal year 2013 budget is not a factor in creating the conditions that lead to a “hollow force” however the potential effects of sequestration will make it a factor that leads to a “hollow force.”

The third factor is difficulties in maintaining an all-volunteer force and is an issue of quantity and quality, described by failing to meet recruiting and retention goals, a change in the quality of soldiers based on qualification levels of recruits, and the impact of the economy through inflation and unemployment. The post-Vietnam Army shows a drop in education levels and test scores among recruits and a high level of inflation compounded by the base pay falling behind the cost of living. These factors led to the difficulty in accessing and retaining quality recruits and directly impacted the readiness of the Army over the course of the 1970s with the Army falling 15,000 short of its authorized end strength and not meet recruiting goals. This failure to maintain the quantity of soldiers and the large departure of first term soldiers for indiscipline as an indicator of low quality demonstrates the conditions that indicate a “hollow force.” The Army exceeded its fiscal year 2011 recruiting goals and exceeded its retention goals in all categories. The influences of inflation and high unemployment rates make the Army an attractive career option and the Army is not having difficulties in maintaining the quantity and quality of the Army, therefore this factor does not support the creation of a “hollow force” today.

The fourth factor of declining pay is described as pay and compensation amounts as compared to the civilian sector and annual pay raises with amounts below the civilian sector indicating conditions of the “hollow force” factor. The decline in base pay and inflation following the Vietnam War led to the income of an E-4 with dependents in 1970 being below the official poverty level and military pay that lagged behind civilian sector wages by 20 percent, indicating the factor of a “hollow force.” Comparatively, military basic pay has increased nearly 35 percent over the last ten years and the total of pay and compensation increasing by over 55 percent above inflation since fiscal year 1998. Although military pay and benefits are being discussed for potential changes and reductions as a way to reduce defense spending in the future, currently declining pay is not a factor in creating a “hollow force.”

The fifth factor of poor morale indicates the conditions that enable a “hollow force” due to more than 10 percent of the soldier population committing offenses or being absent without leave, as well as the Army’s failure to meet recruiting and retention goals. Failing to meet recruiting and retention goals and discipline problems indicated by close to 12 percent of soldiers committing serious offenses, compounded by large numbers of soldiers being absent without leave and committing drug related offenses indicate the factor of poor morale and a “hollow force” following the Vietnam War. Statistics from 2011 show that there are a number of drug crimes, AWOL offenses, and drunk driving without damage to personal property that show a level of indiscipline in the Army however exceeding recruiting and retention goals during the same year indicates that the force is stressed and lacks discipline. The discipline problems are indicators that there may be lower levels of morale in the Army however the retention and recruitment of the



quantity and quality of soldiers make for inconclusive results for this factor in creating conditions for the presence of a “hollow force.”

The sixth factor of a delay in the fielding of modern armaments and equipment is described by the modernization programs that are delayed with programs not being funded, canceled, or delayed more than 12 months indicating the factor that leads to hollowness. The Army’s portion of the procurement budget fell from \$30 billion to \$8 billion, a 74 percent reduction, during the period of 1969 to 1975; with procurement cuts almost double that of the percent for the entire Department of Defense. The modernization efforts of the Army through the “Big Five” weapon systems attempted to replace weapon systems and technology from the 1950s however the leadership was forced to choose between modernization and readiness. The “Big Five” weapons programs began in 1972 lacked the funding to quickly get them to the field, with the M1 tank not received by units until 1980; the Apache attack helicopter in 1983, the Patriot air defense missile in 1984 and the Bradley Fighting Vehicle not arriving in units until 1988. The reduction in procurement and modernization during the mid-1970s forced leaders to choose to invest in modernization over readiness in an inversely proportional relationship, ultimately contributing to the Army being a “hollow force” following the Vietnam War. Statistics above show reductions in wheeled vehicle fleet programs and multiple launch rocket systems while there is an overall increase in missile defense and unmanned aerial systems. These reductions are indicators of a change in resourcing priorities. The Army’s 2013 budget request prioritizes the Network, the Ground Combat Vehicle (GCV), the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV), the Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicle and the Paladin Integrated Management Program in addition to a large

investment in unmanned aerial systems. To resource the changed priorities in the fiscally constrained environment, the Army will delay the modernization of helicopters for three to five years, delay the procurement of the Ground Combat Vehicle Program, and make reductions in the wheeled vehicle fleet programs. These changes in priorities in funding programs and delays indicate that this likely a factor in creating the conditions of a “hollow force.”

The seventh and final factor of inadequate attention to maintenance of existing equipment is described as the amounts of O&M funds in constant fiscal year 2012 dollars provided for resetting equipment with a reduction or lack of sufficient funds to maintain equipment, obtain repair parts, and conduct refurbishment or recapitalization programs indicate a “hollow force.” The cutting of the O&M budget by \$33 billion and the fielding of 16 divisions following the Vietnam War forced the leadership to make difficult decisions resulting in shortages of equipment, an inability to repair equipment, and the unavailability of repair parts. This led to seven of the sixteen Army divisions reporting that they were “not combat ready” by 1979 and hindered the ability of the reserve component to serve as the round out force for the active component since they received less-modernized equipment the active component was no longer using. These conditions led to a “hollow force.” Congress has placed a significant emphasis on resetting the military’s equipment through the defense budget in order to reset wartime equipment, affords the Army latitude in how it spends its O&M funds and resets its equipment. Additionally, the overseas contingency operations budget, of which \$30 million is requested for O&M in the fiscal year 2013 request, has provided the primary source of reset expenditures. The Army will utilize fiscal year 2013 funds to continue modernizing

the M1 Abrams tank, the M2 Bradley infantry fighting vehicle, and the Stryker fighting vehicle but can change priorities internally if the need for heavy vehicles is not as great as originally determined or other shortfalls are identified. Because of the flexibility the Army owns in determining where it spends funds to maintain and reset equipment, the factor of inadequate attention to maintenance of existing equipment is not present today and does not create the conditions of a “hollow force.”

The evidence that supports the factors of low public support for the military and delays in fielding modern armaments and equipment were particularly strong and provide conclusive evidence of the low support not being a factor and delays being a factor in determining the presence of a ‘hollow force’ today.

The comprehensive effects of all seven factors allowed the conditions that led to the “hollow force” following the Vietnam War. It is generally accepted that the seven factors describe hollowness and provide reliable indicators of its presence during the Vietnam War. They also provide a framework and baseline data set allowing comparison against the Army in today’s operational environment.

These seven factors still apply today, with the exception of the third factor: difficulties in maintaining an all-volunteer force. The transition from a conscription Army to an all-volunteer Army was a major shift in 1972 and 1973; however, the all-volunteer force is the generally accepted current and future way the Army will maintain its strength. Returning to a conscripted Army or something other than a volunteer force is a massive change in political and societal ways of thought and would require a dramatic event to catalyze such a change. The other six factors provide descriptions and a definition that are still relevant for comparison today. The importance of the indicators of

each factor may change due to societal and economic pressures over time but they provide a solid foundation to conduct research and analyze against in a case study comparison.

Additional factors could include: poor civilian to military relationship where the trust and confidence of civilian leaders and military leaders towards each other impacts policy and decision-making. This might be difficult to objectively measure and analyze due to reliance on open and media sources to report information that might otherwise be preferred to be kept quiet. Poor leadership, or the perception of poor leadership from internal and external sources, is another factor that could be used to describe the conditions of a “hollow force.” Although leadership might be an indicator of poor morale, using survey data and investigations that indicated leadership failures with an increasing trend or historical comparison could be a factor of a “hollow force.”

There are areas for future research that will enable a more comprehensive determination of the potential creation of a “hollow force” as final reduction decisions are made and implemented. The concepts of reversibility and expansibility appear similar to the Total Force policy where capabilities are transferred from the active component to the reserve component during force structure reductions. These concepts are not publicly fully developed and potential success in mitigating the risk of losing the quality of the Army can only be speculated about.

The indications of rising levels of offenses and the lack of discipline in the Army as they impact the overall level of morale in the Army is another area requiring more research in the future. The increase in the number of offenses from 2010 to 2011 coincides with the increase in troop levels in Afghanistan and may demonstrate an

increasing trend over time similar to the increase during the surge to support operations in Iraq during 2007 and 2008. The statistics for offenses and acts of indiscipline for 2012 and 2013 as the requirements to support operations in Afghanistan decrease, will provide additional insight into the factor of poor morale and its influence on creating a “hollow force” in the mid-term future, rather than a discipline problem across the ranks of the Army.

The term “hollow force” was used initially in the late 1970s following the Vietnam War and again during the 1990s to describe military forces that appear mission ready but upon a closer examination, actually suffer from shortages in personnel, equipment, maintenance, or training deficiencies. The size and composition of forces appeared adequate however doubt existed as to whether they could actually accomplish their assigned missions. The term has been used recently as commitments to the GWOT are expected to change by the end of 2014 and the post-conflict downsizing ensues. Despite military and civilian leaders using the term “hollow force” to describe the potential future of the Army, this research does not support their claims and the use of the term is not appropriate.

The Army will be smaller in the future and leaders acknowledge that it will be less capable of executing large stability or contingency operations. A more accurate description of the Army may be a capable, smaller Army, but one that can be stretched thin quickly if not augmented by the reserve component, coalition partners, or other agencies. The reduction in size and resources will challenge the capabilities of the Army especially in the dynamic security environment with hybrid threats, cyber security threats, COIN and mass atrocity relief operations serving as only some of the

contemporary issues the Army is dealing with. Future research will provide insight into how the Army is prepared for these evolving threats.

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